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2 SECTIONS

Faulty joints may have to be replaced

5,000 sought for check on hip implants

By Rachel Ellis, Oliver August and Peter Foster

FIVE THOUSAND people who have undergone hip replacement operations are being sought because they have been given faulty implants that can come loose and erode healthy bones, causing fractures.

The patients — mostly pensioners — were given Capital 3M hip replacements between August 1991 and April last year. Some may have to have repeat operations, while others will need to be X-rayed and be carefully monitored by doctors. The process could cost £10,000 per patient.

The Department of Health is due to issue a warning about the prosthesis today and the manufacturer, 3M Health Care, is setting up a helpline for doctors in anticipation of a flood of calls — although it declined to comment on the move last night.

People affected will be contacted by individual hospitals and GPs will be sent information about the replacement hip so that they can advise their patients. They are being asked not to use the helpline, whose number will be released today.

The warning from the Government's Medical Devices Agency, which monitors the use of medical equipment, comes after growing concern about the Capital 3M hip. Doctors from Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital in Nottingham published a paper last year saying that a quarter of patients with that hip experienced early failure of the implant. Hip replacements are supposed to last 20 years,

but the 3M lasted on average just over two years, they said, attributing the problem to its titanium nitride-coated surface.

About 40,000 hip replacements are carried out every year and more than 140,000 people are awaiting the operation. The most famous recipient is, of course, the Queen Mother, who demonstrated the effectiveness of the operation on Tuesday when she walked out of hospital with very little support just 23 days after undergoing her second hip replacement.

She had broken her bone after tripping on loose asphalt while inspecting the royal stud at Sandringham. Her right hip joint had already been replaced in 1995.

There are more than a hundred types of hip prosthesis for surgeons to choose from, with the shaft of the artificial head of the femur slotting into the shaft of the existing bone.

Michael Fearne, who has a hip practice at Central Middlesex Hospital and is head of orthopaedic trauma at Charing Cross Hospital, said: "If the prosthesis fails early, the bone becomes thin and revision becomes more difficult. All the patients should be reviewed. We know that these implants don't last the course, but they are still being produced."

Medical devices do not have to meet the stringent controls imposed on the pharmaceutical industry, but a 1995 European directive to be implemented by this June will

require clinical evaluation of new implants.

The Loughborough-based 3M Health Care is part of the American Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M) company which operates in three areas: industrial products, electronics and medical products. The company, the 63rd biggest in America, is best known for its invention of the Post-It Note, which is said to have been developed out of a failed attempt to create a new super-glue.

The company was founded as Durez Abrasives in 1902 by five Minnesota businessmen who wanted to sell Corundum to manufacturers of grinding wheels. Its name was changed to Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing in 1951 and to 3M in 1971.

Based in St Paul, Minnesota, it now has about 300 sales offices and distribution centres in 60 countries. Half of its sales come from overseas and Europe is its biggest market, although it is currently expanding in Asia. According to the latest figures, 3M's UK businesses reported a pre-tax profit of £36 million in 1996 on a turnover of £635 million.

The company claims to invest a high proportion of its profits into research and development. It actively encourages staff creativity, allowing them to spend 15 per cent of their work day, called "booting time", tinkering with new products. The policy appears to pay off: about a third of the company's revenue comes from products introduced within the past four years.



Enoch Powell's widow, Pamela, is flanked by her daughters Jennifer, left, and Susan as they leave St Margaret's Church, Westminster, yesterday after the funeral service for her husband. A second service was later held in Warwick. Report, page 6. William Rees-Mogg, page 20

Redwood rebuked over attack on Kohl

By Philip Webster and Michael Binyon

WILLIAM HAGUE publicly slapped down John Redwood last night, ordering him to withdraw an attack on the decision to grant Helmut Kohl the freedom of the City of London.

The Shadow President of the Board of Trade had said that the Government and the City were wrong to recognise Herr Kohl and suggested that the Prime Minister had been behind the honour to help to "prepare for the abolition of the pound by stealth".

The attack, under the headline "The City must not honour EMU", came in

a press release published on Tory Central Office paper. But Mr Redwood had clearly not consulted his colleagues about it and at precisely the moment the German Chancellor was being honoured at Guildhall, Mr Hague was ordering Mr Redwood to withdraw his statement.

With Michael Howard on his way to represent the Conservatives at the ceremony, Mr Hague took his trade spokesman aside after last night's Shadow Cabinet meeting and told him that his criticism was ill-judged. Within minutes a senior Tory source said: "Mr Redwood's press release is withdrawn." Mr Hague's spokesman made

clear that the Tory leader strongly supported the award and said that Mr Hague believed Herr Kohl had made an outstanding contribution to the world through the unification of Germany without bloodshed.

Mr Redwood's statement had said: "Many British people have no personal dislike of Chancellor Kohl, but are strongly against monetary union. As monetary union is Chancellor Kohl's crusade, the City's decision over EMU has been overwhelmed by their endorsement of its architect."

Suggesting that Tony Blair was behind the honour, he continued: "If Mr Blair does want to recognise Mr

Kohl he should say so and do so openly. Instead he has embarrassed the City of London who will now be entertaining a most unfortunate guest against the most unfortunate background of a street protest."

"The City to make amends will ignore Chancellor Kohl's work on monetary union in their citation. This is as realistic as honouring Nelson Mandela but saying you did not necessarily agree with his moving and brilliant campaign against apartheid."

The statement brought a swift response from Labour: the Prime Minister's spokesman described it as

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Tamworth no 3 is on the run

A pig from the same litter as the Tamworth Two was being sought last night after escaping just before he was due to go to the slaughterhouse.

The pig escaped as Mike Hawker was trying to load him into a van at his farm in Wiltshire. The pig's siblings spent several days on the run last month.

Iraq hard line

Tony Blair has laid down strict preconditions before accepting any diplomatic solution resulting from the UN General Secretary's visit to Baghdad.

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BMW steals a lead with new Rolls

By Alan Cripps

THE first Rolls-Royce to be powered by a BMW engine goes on sale next month, making it increasingly likely that the last remaining major carmaker in British hands will be sold to the German company that already owns Rover.

The Silver Seraph will be launched on March 3 at the Geneva Motor Show, much earlier than originally thought. It is the first new model from the company for 18 years and only the ninth in its 90-year history. It is the first of a new generation of cars designed to keep the world's most prestigious manufacturer competitive into the 21st century.

It has a V12 engine, five-speed automatic transmission and is expected to sell for around £150,000. It will be followed in three months time by a Bentley model, the Arnage, with a V8 BMW engine and a slightly lower price tag.

The models represent a huge step forward for the company. The Seraph is lighter, has softer, more flowing lines and is more manoeuvrable than the traditional Rolls-Royce. But the interior will retain the marque's luxurious use of leather and wood. The BMW engines replace a V8 based on a General Motors design that dates back to the 1950s.

The launch comes as Vickers, parent company of

Rolls-Royce Motors which it announced its intention to sell last year, holds talks with at least five bidders including BMW, Volkswagen, Daimler-Benz — which owns Mercedes — and Toyota. A consortium led by Formula One racing tycoon Bernie Ecclestone and the Rolls-Royce Action Group, formed by enthusiasts determined to keep the company in British hands, have also expressed an interest. No price has been put on the company

by Vickers but it is thought to be worth £400million. Graham Morris, chief executive of Rolls-Royce Motors, has said price is not the only factor in determining the bidder.

Although the use of a BMW engine was no secret, the speed with which the new car has been designed, built and launched will take the motor industry by surprise and is likely to dismay BMW's rival bidders. Last month Bernd Pischetsrieder, BMW chairman, made it clear that if a rival succeeded in buying Rolls-Royce it would cease to supply engines. However, a Vickers spokesman said yesterday that the engine deal included safeguards to prevent any overnight cut-off of supplies.

The company had gone to great lengths to keep the early launch date and name of the new car secret but it leaked yesterday in the American magazine *Automotive News*.



The Silver Seraph: a touch of luxury for about £150,000

Suspected Paris serial killer held

A MAN wanted by French police for questioning about serial killings in Paris is being held in London, Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday (Stewart Tindler writes).

The so-called "Beast of Basille" has been linked to seven murders and one attempted killing between 1991 and 1997 — all in the centre of Paris.

The man was arrested in central London by officers from the Yard's extradition squad after a tip-off by Paris police. Last night he was being held under the Immigration and Nationality Act 1971 until Paris officers arrived to return him to France.

A photograph of a suspect in the serial killings had been circulated throughout Europe last week. Earlier this month, French police said that they suspected the murderer might be hiding in either London or Belgium.

Cheap and cheerful — Brown's No 11 floorshow

By Andrew Pierce
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN has added to Labour's embarrassment over lavish spending by the Lord Chancellor by vetoing expensive new carpets at 11 Downing Street in favour of bare floorboards.

The Chancellor reinforced his reputation for thrift when he was confronted by a threadbare carpet in the State Room, the grandest at his official residence.

"He told his staff to throw the bare boards in their place," said one Labour MP last night. Mr Brown, famous

for his austere tastes, never even considered a replacement Axminster. He ordered his staff to polish the floorboards instead. The back-to-basics solution cost the taxpayer £200.

The Treasury refused to discuss the finer points of the interior decoration of the Chancellor's grace-and-favour home. But it emerged yesterday that the penny-pinching Chancellor ordered his functionaries to "hire a polishing machine and do the job themselves. Such machines can be hired for as little as £30 a day."

The meagre expenditure at No 11 is in stark contrast to

the £650,000 being spent on Lord Irvine of Lairg's official apartments at the House of Lords. The carpets, at £34 a square yard, will cost £21,000.

A Downing Street spokesman was reluctant to elaborate on the latest ministerial disclosures last night, saying: "It falls into the absolute total trivia category of public life. I have no idea whether there is a new carpet or an old carpet or a frayed carpet and frankly I don't much care."

But privately ministerial sources were furious that controversy over Lord Irvine had been kept simmering and they claimed to detect an

attempt to smear the Lord Chancellor in a row being dubbed "polishgate" by gleeful Tory MPs last night.

The contrasting styles of the Cabinet colleagues came to light at a reception on Tuesday for Emily's List, which was set up to campaign for more women MPs.

The Chancellor maintained his parsimonious approach with arrangements for the reception. The food was paid for by Ken Follet, the millionaire novelist, whose wife Barbara, a Labour MP, was a founder member of Emily's List. The wine was laid on by the Co-operative Wholesale Society.



"Would you still love me if I told you my flat was more Gordon Brown than Lord Irvine?"

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Blair beats Thatcher to the out-of-body experience

On the Front Bench yesterday the Prime Minister underwent an out-of-body experience. He called himself "he". Something similar once happened to Margaret Thatcher. For her, the personal pronoun "I" began to lack the requisite majesty. En route for Moscow she remarked: "We are in the fortunate position in Britain of being, as it were, the senior person in power." She finally saw herself as a plurality. "We are a grandmother," she told the crowd outside Downing

Street. But that was not before 1989. It had taken her ten years.

It has taken Tony Blair ten months. Majesty now leads him, too, to ditch the vulgar "I" — but not for "we". During Prime Minister's Questions yesterday a certain Mr Anthony Blair MP told backbenchers what he thought the Prime Minister could not do.

Peter Atkinson (C, Hexham) had reminded Blair of a phrase in Labour's manifesto promising to force companies to recognise a trade union —

but not unless "a majority of the workforce" wanted this. Could he tell the House what that meant? "No, he can't," replied Mr Blair.

So the Prime Minister is now able to step outside his own person, walk around himself, inspect himself, give himself a prod or two, and discuss himself as a sort of dignified object. Mr Blair offers his own (very privileged) description of the mind of this lofty personage. Whatever he does eventually do, he will be able to praise his

MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

wisdom in doing it. In time he may even ask himself respectful questions, which will save having to plant them on the jellyfish occupying the benches behind him.

It has long been a tradition in the House that Members do not call each other "you" but address each other through the Chair. Thus an

MP refers to his opponent as "the hon Member" and asks for "his" (or "her") response. This has nothing to do with pomp or circumstance: it is to stop people hitting each other. By standing back from that brutally direct pronoun "you" MPs are distanced from the personal, and encouraged to conduct exchanges in a de-

tached way. You do not say "Oh — you", you say "Madam Speaker, might I might have the Rt hon Gentleman's attention" — which draws the sting.

Outside Parliament in Britain there are only a few other circumstances when "you" is commonly avoided. One is when an adult is addressing an infant. "Mummy is not cross that Jamie has soiled his romper-suit: she's just very, very sad."

The other is addressing nobles. A king or queen (or a duke or duchess) ought not to

be addressed as "you" but referred to as "Your Majesty" (or, to a duke: "Your Grace"). "Does Your Majesty take sugar in his tea?" one might ask. There is an old Punch joke in which a caller at the door asks: "Are their graces within?" Comes the reply: "Is is, 'ers aint'."

This custom has arisen out of respect for hierarchy. It was once forbidden even to look at a king: now we show deference by not calling him "you". A monarch may also refer to

himself in the third person, saying, for instance, "the King is pleased..."

In calling himself "he" yesterday, I suspect the Prime Minister mistook the parliamentary use of the third person for something half way between the kingly use and the "Mummy is not cross" use. Unsure whether talking to a backbencher was like talking to a serf or a baby, he adopted a speech-pattern appropriate to either.

Your sketchwriter (oops) deplores the habit.

Private sector to replace State in welfare reforms

By JILL SHERMAN AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE Green Paper on welfare reforms will pave the way for a massive expansion of private-sector provision and a dwindling role for the State, Frank Field disclosed last night.

The Welfare Minister indicated that more people would provide for themselves by taking out insurance or joining private schemes. Mr Field, whose Green Paper is being studied by the Prime Minister's Welfare Committee before its publication next month, said that welfare would expand to meet the growing demands of the under-65s, but the bill would no longer be met in full by the State.

"The welfare budget will increase, but the proportion of this larger bill footed directly by the taxpayer will fall," the Government was now considering what should still be provided by state cover "and which should sensibly be undertaken by people individually, or through other forms of collective cover," he said.

Ministers are already planning to introduce a second "stakeholder" pension under which individuals would take out their own private scheme. Mr Field said the aim was to contain administrative costs which deter people from taking out a private pension. In

the Beveridge Memorial Lecture, Mr Field gave a comprehensive critique of the postwar social security system and the need for change. Before 1948, two thirds of benefit claimants were of retirement age and now two thirds of claimants are younger than that, he said. The number of lone-parent families and those on long-term sick and disability benefits had gone up substantially.

"The big vision now rightly encompasses more than one which simply piles all our expectations onto Government," he said.

Mr Field also signalled much closer ties between the Department of Social Security and the Department for Education and Employment to help people to acquire skills and to prevent poverty. Welfare should alleviate poverty but this should be combined "with measures to help lift them free from poverty, indeed, to prevent them from becoming poor in the first place."

Treasury ministers are keen to replace the industrial injuries scheme with social insurance and is also looking at insurance schemes for nursing care. Ministers are also looking across the whole range of disability benefits to see if more could be provided

through individual insurance. Mr Field emphasised that Labour was still the champion of the poor, but he argued that, to remain in power, the party had to appeal to a much broader electorate, including Middle England. "The poor and the working class are no longer terms which can be accurately interchanged. And the poor no longer have enough votes to win an election."

The dilemmas faced by ministers were highlighted yesterday by a Commons committee which published a report on reforms to America's welfare provision. MPs on the Social Security Committee, who travelled to America to examine the "Wisconsin Works" project, said the scheme had succeeded in moving people off benefits and into work, but only through increased spending and unacceptable penalties. The MPs said the scheme provided useful lessons, but was too harsh for Britain.

Under the Wisconsin scheme, single mothers are expected to return to work once their youngest child is 12 weeks old. Parents who claim that they cannot work because of the high costs of childcare are given help on condition that they find work.

Leading article, page 21



Sinn Féin Chairman Mitchel McLaughlin leads his delegation from the High Court in Dublin yesterday

Sinn Féin awaits expulsion ruling

By MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THREE days of political and legal manoeuvring in Dublin ended last night with Sinn Féin still fighting a furious rearguard action against its expulsion from the peace talks.

The British and Irish governments were weighing the views of all seven participating parties before announcing whether Sinn Féin should be expelled, at least for a few weeks, for two murders in Belfast last week blamed on the IRA. That announcement could come today.

Sinn Féin separately sought

an injunction in Dublin's High Court blocking its expulsion on grounds of natural justice. Its legal team claimed

Sinn Féin had been denied access to the evidence, had no connection to the killings and had an electoral mandate to attend the talks. After two hours Mr Justice Frederick Morris adjourned the hearing until today.

The peace talks moved to Dublin on Monday in the hope that a change of venue might inject some momentum into the process. They left town last night after three

days of what can only be called high farce.

Scores of ministers, politicians and officials attended, all staying at public expense in Dublin's finest hotels. Hundreds of national and international journalists converged on Dublin Castle. The exercise consumed millions of man-hours and hundreds of thousands of pounds, yet the negotiations exchanged not a single word on the future governance of Northern Ireland.

Sinn Féin — media manipulators par excellence —

hogged centre stage from beginning to end. In the talks and courts they waged their battle against expulsion. They came facing almost certain ejection for two IRA murders in Belfast last week, and left having somehow contrived to portray themselves as victims of a "lynch mob" led by the British Government and the Ulster Unionists.

Even George Mitchell, the eternally optimistic talks chairman, admitted last night that "nobody ever said it would be easy — and that was an understatement".

Redwood Blair maintains hard line over Annan mission

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR laid down strict preconditions yesterday before any diplomatic solution resulting from Kofi Annan's visit to Baghdad could be accepted.

In remarks that suggested the Prime Minister shares President Clinton's scepticism over whether the UN Secretary-General's mission can succeed, Mr Blair told the Commons that there must be "no inhibition preventing inspectors doing their work and nothing must undermine the inspections process".

Mr Blair wished the mission success but he insisted that it was within agreed parameters. He was clearly making plain in advance that there could be no watering down of American and British demands on Saddam.

At the same time, Mr Blair received the support of the leading leftwinger in his Cabinet, Clare Short, made plain that she will not resign if Britain takes military action against Iraq. Ms Short, who resigned from the Labour front bench over Neil Kinnock's support for the Gulf War in 1991, is making clear that whatever her private views she will abide by collective Cabinet responsibility.

Interviewed in the *New Statesman*, she said it was an

"enormously complex crisis in that no police officers had been charged or disciplined, even though Lord Justice Taylor of Gostforth's original public inquiry blamed a 'failure of control' by South Yorkshire Police for the disaster."

Mr Straw said this highlighted serious shortcomings in the police discipline system and promised to introduce reforms soon. The Government is also to bring forward reforms of coroners' inquests after the Home Secretary accepted that they were "unsuitable" for investigating major disasters where there had already been a full public inquiry.

The key new evidence studied by Lord Justice Stuart-Smith was a video from a CCTV at the Leppings Lane End of the ground which police initially said was taken by a faulty camera and then said was missing. There was also said to be medical evidence that some victims who died were still alive after 3.15pm, the cut-off time imposed by Stefan Popper, the coroner.

Lord Justice Stuart-Smith concluded that there was no new video evidence which was not available to the original inquiry or the inquest. He dismissed suggestions that the inquest was flawed.

Her words are important to Mr Blair. Although only 23 Labour MPs rebelled in the Iraq debate on Tuesday, reservations among Labour MPs are more widely spread and Mr Blair will be hoping to avoid any ministerial resignations as the crisis unfolds.

Yesterday, as he stepped up his efforts to win public support for the use of force, Mr Blair gave the Commons a detailed explanation of how inspectors discovered Saddam's presidential sites.

He said that UN inspectors became convinced that Iraq was operating a concealment mechanism to hide its full weapon-making capability.

Some of the concealed sites were vast compounds. "They are not just palaces, they are vast compounds with hundreds of buildings in them. They could see equipment being moved around, documents being burnt."

Doubts over strikes, page 12
Gulf build-up, pages 16 & 17

Army to relax its nationality rules

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

HISTORIC rules that have barred people from joining the Armed Forces unless they have parents from Britain, the Commonwealth or the Irish Republic are to be relaxed from April 1, the Government announced yesterday.

Young men and women who were born in this country, although their parents are not British, will now be allowed to enlist in any of the three services, provided they pass rigorous security checks.

Those who have become British after applying for citizenship will also be eligible to join up, even if they have lived

in Britain for less than five years. Until now there has been a strict five-year residency requirement. One Ministry of Defence source said: "If someone is a British citizen who has lived in this country at the same address in, say, Herefordshire for three years and comes through the security vetting, he or she will be able to apply for a job in the Armed Forces."

The relaxation of the parentage rules was announced by John Reid, the Armed Forces Minister, who made it clear that he hoped the relaxation of the rules would help to boost recruiting, particularly in the Army which is still short of about 4,800 trained soldiers.

The view that the nationality rules

were out of date arose when it emerged during a Commons exchange that Michael Portillo, who was then the Conservative Defence Secretary, was not eligible to join the Armed Forces because his parents were not both British. Mr Portillo had a Spanish father, the late Luis Gabriel Portillo, and has an English mother.

Dr Reid said yesterday that it was clearly an anomaly that someone could become a British Defence Secretary and yet be barred from joining the Armed Forces.

In certain circumstances, Dr Reid said, where security was of "paramount importance", applicants would be looked at on a case by case basis.

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Britannia and the bigamist bride

Helen Johnstone traces the complicated story of a Portsmouth wife who waived the marriage rules

A WOMAN who bigamously married two sailors from the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, using a divorce paper from an earlier marriage to trick the registrar, was spared jail yesterday.

Hayley Bates, 35, was given a three-month suspended sentence at Portsmouth's Crown Court when she admitted perjury. Bates, a civil servant, failed to reveal that she was married when she wed Stephen Perry at the city's registrar office last January.

The marriage to Mr Perry was declared void two months later when it was discovered that she was married to Andrew Bates. She has since divorced Mr Bates and lives with Mr Perry at Alton Park, near Dorchester. They plan to marry later this year.

Bates, who burst into tears as she left the court supported by Mr Perry, said: "I am not a man-eating bigamist and now I just want to forget the whole thing and look to the future." The court was told that she had used the divorce certificate, which ended her first marriage to David Wigmore in 1992, Judge Thomas MacKean said that Bates escaped jail only for special reasons, which included the damage that the case

had caused to her health. After the hearing, Bates said: "I know I was wrong. But I genuinely believed I was actually divorced from Andrew, so I didn't see the harm in using the absolute from my divorce to Wigmore. The past 12 months have been a nightmare for me and I have lived with the threat of prison hanging over me."

"Steve has stood by me all the way and never doubted me. I love him very much and we plan to get married — for real — as soon as we can."

Simon Privett, for the prosecution, said that she married Mr Bates in November 1994 at Newport, Isle of Wight. But the marriage hit problems and Bates started a relationship with Mr Perry, who had been a guest at the couple's wedding.

Two months after marrying Mr Perry, Bates was arrested by Ministry of Defence police. In interviews she admitted she had used the wrong divorce papers to fool the registrar.

Rosie Magee, representing Bates, said that she was taking three types of antidepressant drugs, suffered from a stomach complaint because of the strain of the case and had attempted sui-



Hayley Bates marrying Andrew Bates, her second husband, on the Isle of Wight in 1994, and, right, the illegal ceremony with Stephen Perry

cide. It was unclear last night who had informed the authorities of the bigamous marriage. Reports that it was the Ministry of Defence were denied by a ministry spokesman at Portsmouth.

Bates met her second husband, Andrew, a stoker on *Britannia*, during Cowes Week in 1994. Shipmates formed a guard of honour for their wedding at the registrar

office at Newport in November that year.

Bates said the relationship came under pressure because Mr Bates's work on the Royal Yacht took him away from home 36 weeks a year. The court was told that she submitted the decree absolute which ended her marriage to Mr Wigmore, and it had been accepted by the registrar before her "third", illegal mar-

riage to Mr Perry in January last year.

Mr Privett said that a charge of bigamy against Bates had been left on the file and at a hearing she admitted perjury in a document not under oath.

Neither Mr Bates, who is now serving as a stoker on *HMS Quorn*, nor Mr Perry were available for comment yesterday.



Mother of murdered girl loses cash claim

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE mother of a girl aged three who was murdered by a care-in-the-community patient broke down yesterday when her £200,000 claim for damages against a health authority was thrown out by the High Court.

Beverly Palmer, a nurse, had claimed that Shaun Armstrong, who abducted her daughter Rosie when she went to buy an ice-cream, should have been safely locked away at the time of the murder in 1994, and had accused Tees Health Authority of negligence.

But Master Hodgson said that the facts were "hotly in dispute". He said Armstrong had made no specific threats against Mrs Palmer's daughter, and by law there was no duty of care owed by hospitals or those who worked for them "to the world at large or to the female half of the population".

Mrs Palmer, 40, who plans to appeal, said after the hearing: "There was no justice here. The judge accepted there was clear evidence of fault by the health authority."

She had accused the authority of failing to ensure that Armstrong, 36, who suffered from a personality disorder and who had allegedly threatened to kill, was not released into the community. Rosie's body was found by police in the airing cupboard of Armstrong's flat in Hartlepool. He was sent to prison for life at Leeds Crown Court after admitting murder.

Assault claim by Fayed woman

By A CORRESPONDENT

POLICE are investigating claims that the woman who says Dodi Fayed is the father of her child was attacked and injured by two men in a service station.

Diane Holliday, 36, is recovering in hospital after claiming she was bed up and beaten on her way home from visiting friends in Harwich, Essex. Describing the incident as having happened at 8pm on Tuesday at the Becon Hill service station, near Ipswich.

A Suffolk police spokesman said the woman involved claimed her hands were bound and she suffered cuts to her head, hands and bruising to her face. He refused to confirm officially that Ms Holliday, who lives near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, was the victim. She was taken to Ipswich Hospital where she was due to be interviewed by detectives yesterday.

A niece of Ms Holliday, who lives in Harwich, said she had not heard anything about the attack until earlier yesterday and did not know how her aunt was.

Earlier this month, Ms Holliday claimed to be the mother of Mr Fayed's 15-month-old daughter, Maril. She said the girl, who has been adopted, was the product of a brief affair with the Harrods heir who died with Diana, Princess of Wales, in a car crash in Paris last August.

Last week she was arrested and interviewed by police concerning an allegation of deception.

Man whose life was wasted wins apology

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A MAN who says he has had a wasted life received a government apology yesterday. Noel Smith, 52, spent years living cautiously because of a misdiagnosis of a heart condition. He wanted to be an opera singer.

The case of Mr Smith, now 75, was raised in the Commons by Eddie O'Hara, MP for Knowsley South, who complained that problems in finding medical records were spoiling his constituent's case for legal redress. In an adjournment debate, Paul Boateng, the Health Minister, said: "I can only express profound regret on behalf of the NHS. I would be only too happy, if it would assist in any way, to meet Mr Smith in order to express to him in person my sincere regrets and the regrets of the service."

Mr Smith was admitted to Myrtle Street Children's Hospital in Liverpool in 1929 with rheumatic fever. He was told by a cardiologist that he had a critical heart condition and would not live beyond his teens. He was taken from his family and forced to live in a home for children with heart problems and placed on a regime of strong drugs to prevent strain on a supposedly defective valve.

For more than half a century, he was made to live like a chronic invalid, avoiding all strenuous exercise and stress and forced to give up any ambitions of being an opera singer in favour of light, low-paid office work.

Mr Smith, of Whiston,

Liverpool, was given repeat prescriptions for glyceryl trinitrate for years until, in 1981, he saw a specialist who told him that the first diagnosis had been wrong. He was not sick after all. Since then, he has been trying to seek compensation for what he believes is a wasted life.

In the Commons, Mr O'Hara said that Mr Smith now suffers from degeneration of the cell walls around his veins—a lasting side-effect from the medication. In his own words, his blood vessels are now like a leaky boat, and he suffers chronic leg pain.

It was claimed that Mr Smith had not been given full access to his medical records. Apparently in 1983 his records disappeared to Hertfordshire from Liverpool, and it was not until 1985 that they were returned. Even then, there was a battle to gain access to them and when Mr Smith finally received them, there were key sections missing. The MP said that the lack of access to medical records had been "very mysterious and very sinister".

Mr Smith said: "I am entitled to an explanation. I also know I am entitled to compensation for the pain and injury that I am suffering to this day."

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that the health authority had made strenuous efforts to trace back the records but this had proved impossible for the years before the NHS was established.

Editor who doesn't curry favour with sulky waiters

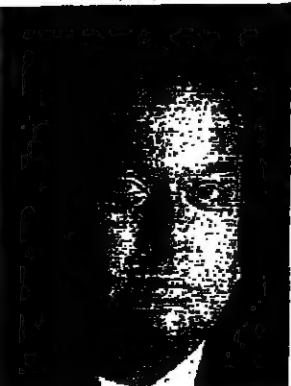
By HELEN JOHNSTONE

WAITERS at Britain's Indian restaurants have been branded "miserable gits" by the editor-in-chief of the curry industry's own bible. He says they make dining out more like going to a funeral.

The attack comes in a lengthy, scolding editorial from Iqbal Wazir, editor-in-chief of the influential monthly *Tandoori Magazine* which calls itself *The Voice of the Industry* and is mailed direct to 8,000 curry houses in Britain and another 2,000 throughout Europe.

The article advises restaurant owners to cheer up staff by treating them fairly. Weekly bonuses of £100 to waiters who sold the most curries would soon bring a smile to their faces.

At the moment, he complains, nothing typifies the Indian restaurant experience as much as the sulky, miserable waiter. "Walk into an Indian restaurant, no matter



Iqbal Wazir: waiters can be "miserable gits"

how posh, and more likely than not you will be greeted by a miserable git. It's as if his day has been ruined by your arrival."

The editorial has the full support of magazine editor Ash Hashmi, who said it was constructive. "We can't afford to be complacent and we have to push our people to achieve even better results."

Jim Ainsworth, editor of the

Good Food Guide, accused Mr Wazir of making "silly comments".

The article brought a mixed response from Indian waiters around the country, one of whom said Mr Wazir was the miserable git.

Wahed Ali, aged 22, from Bournemouth, said: "The guy must have had a bad experience but it's nonsense to brand everyone with the same label. There's a miserable git in every kind of industry but you don't have to put down everyone."

Iqbal Chowdhury, 45, from York, who has been invited to join the judging panel of the Bangladesh British Curry Award 1998, said: "It is probably true that waiters can be grumpy but the industry is modernising and becoming more professional."

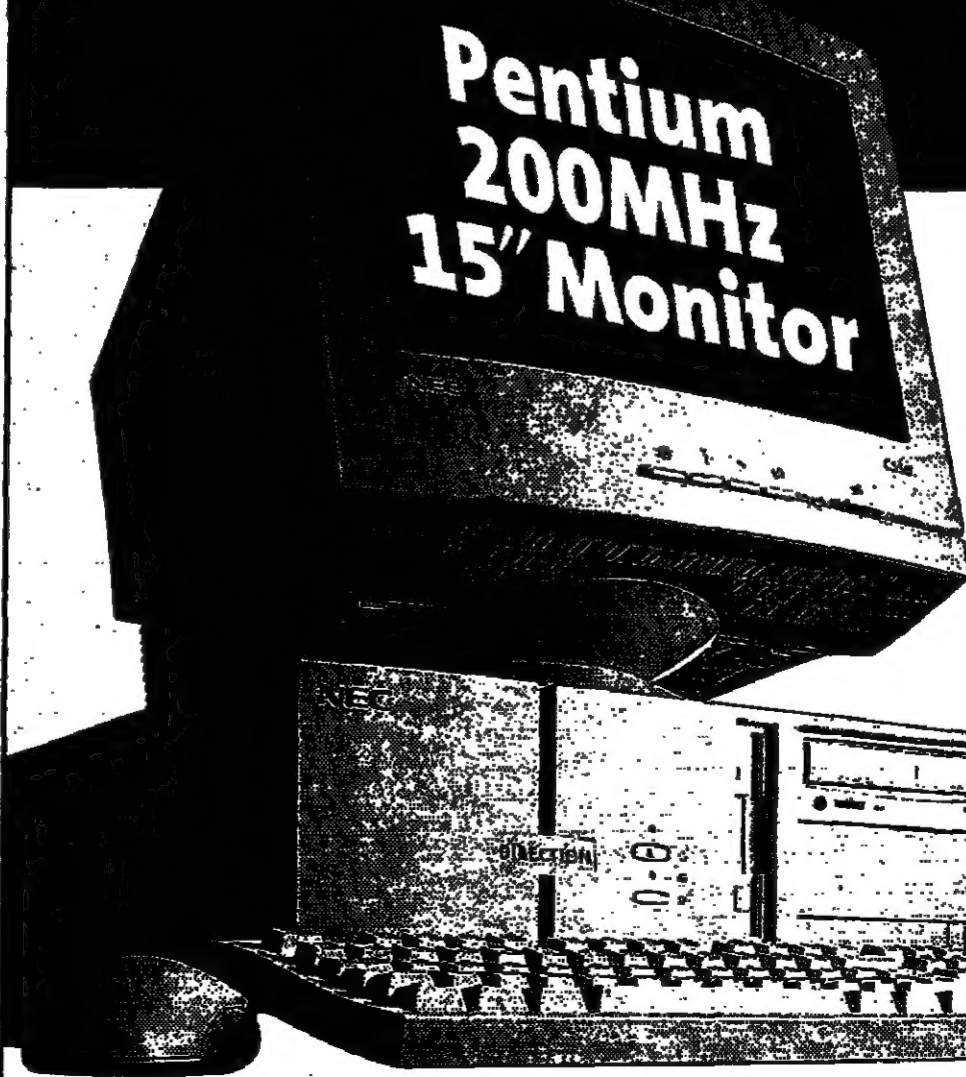
Kuni Miah, managing partner in a Southampton restaurant, said: "I went to a Thai restaurant the other night and the bloke who served me was so unfriendly."

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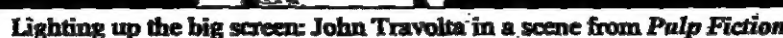
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BY ILL SHERMAN AND CHARLES BRENNER

*The tobacco advertising di-

The delicately negotiated deal was agreed at the Council of Health Ministers last December by only one vote, with Greece backing the common position at the last minute.

The European Parliament's environment committee is now expected to take several months to reach a position on the law, making it very unlikely that it could be returned to the Council of Health Ministers in late April, as originally hoped by Britain.



By CAROL MIDGLEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

Uma Thurman's hand-rolled cigarettes in *Pulp Fiction* and Bruce Willis's

But pro-smoking campaigners said the report was patronising and neglected the fact that films were supposed to portray real life. "It's ridiculous to suggest that just because someone has seen a movie star smoking they are going to rush round the corner

The study, *Smoking in Films*, found that 80 per cent of the top 10 films made in 1990 and 1995 contained smoking scenes. In 1990 the top ten films contained a total of 83 smoking scenes. By 1991 it had risen to 298.

By NICHOLAS WATT

Mr Foulkes's announcement came after Labour MPs joined the Tories in criticising the Government for its response to the eruption that killed 19 people in June last year.

The obituaries of Mr Powell have had a curiously dated character, marked by the black and white film of the "rivers of blood" speech. They have caught his haunting and spell-binding voice, but have somehow missed his real contribution. Mr

The Corporation of London was fully justified in honouring Chancellor Kohl for his contribution to Europe, regardless of what one thinks of the merits of monetary union. The protests against the award yesterday by John Gorton and other Tories sounded childish and petty-minded. They were like Oxford University's mean-spirited vote against a honorary degree for Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. Michael Howard, whose sceptic credentials cannot be doubted, showed better judgment in abstaining from the vote. Mr Gorton was rightly disowned by William Hague last night for his misjudgment and had to withdraw his press statement. Mr Redwood's one-man campaign

to gain press attention are increasingly testing the patience of his frontbench colleagues. He is forgetting that frenetic activity is not the same as political credibility.

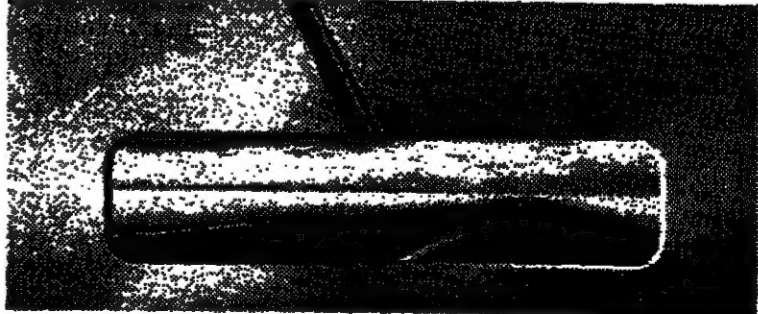
Chancellor Kohl used the opportunity of his City honour to argue for the both inevitability and the desirability of the single currency. Many of his hosts last night will have agreed. The Blair Government accepts the inevitability but is cautious in practice. That was signalled by the reappointment of Mr George for a full five years. The Governor has been openly sceptical about whether the conditions for successful monetary union have been fulfilled. Some pro-European Blairites have wondered whether his views and concentration on reducing inflation — will make it harder for Britain to prepare for entry in four or five years. So if Mr Powell was being remembered as a voice from England's past and Chancellor Kohl honoured as a prime architect of the European present, Mr George will now have an enormous influence on Britain's future relations with Europe.

PETER RIDDELL

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World Cup fans learn to watch their language

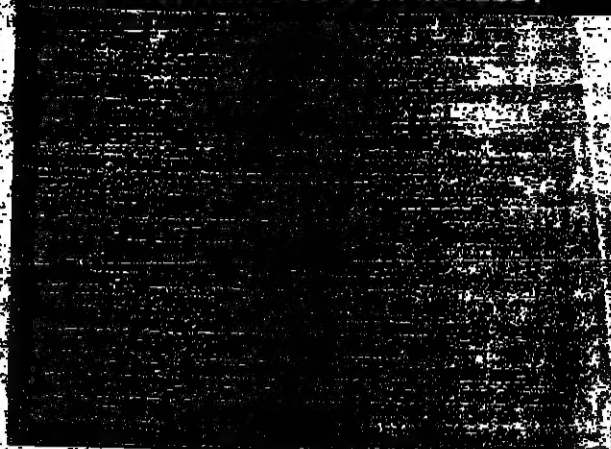
BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

HOWEVER English fans on the pitch in the World Cup this summer, fans heading for France can now avoid being defamed on their travels by the language. They are being offered crash courses in football French.

Despite a growing foreign legion from across the Channel performing in the Premier League (and their commercial attempts to communicate with them in their native tongue), fans of clubs such as Cantona/Cinola, the Wolverhampton Wanderers have teamed up with a local college to provide an intensive course in essential Celtic phrases for supporters visiting the continent.

The course is called "Trois Lions sur un Maillot", which translates as "Three lions on a jersey". Topics covered range from ordering refreshment - "I'll be ten lagers and a packet of crisps" - to requesting a taxi, asking directions to the docks and dealing with basic French security law.

TROIS LIONS SUR UN MAILLOT



The most important lesson will be on football terminology, such as "a defender is not a goalkeeper", which may be useful in a bar to advising the match officials.

The sort of thing you learn from normal French lessons are good if you are going on holiday or business, but we will be teaching them a few phrases you won't ever need on the beach or in the board-

room." The first lesson in the course is called "Going abroad (Which way to the ground, mate?)" and it will be followed by "Fish, chips and lager (What do you mean, no black pudding?)" and "Now get out of that (Officer, it really was nothing to do with me!)"

Among those paying £50 for the seven 90-minute lessons is Dave Price, 38, a Birmingham City fan who has agreed to venture into Wolves territory to attend classes. He said: "We haven't got tickets, but the idea is to go to France and see the games on French TV in a bar, so at least we will be part of it all."

But the trouble with that is, the commentary will be in French. I really need to learn the French for things like offside and penalty, but it would be handy to be able to give the ref a little advice.

The best part will be singing a few songs in French - it wouldn't seem the same in English - so we are learning the French for *Keep Right on till the End of the Road* and even the rugby classic *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*.

The day Oasis beat the Beatles

BY HELEN RUMBELOW

OASIS were the big draw yesterday in a double booking with their heroes the Beatles. Bonhams auction house in London found itself packed with teenagers bidding for props from the Oasis album cover *Be Here Now*.

Items on the cover were chosen by the band in tribute to the Beatles. However, when the memorabilia auction moved on to Beatles items, the crowd vanished, leaving grey-haired men bidding for old 45s.

Among the Oasis bidders was Dominic Clarke, 16, from Crewe, who bought a tour poster for £380 out of his savings, although he was a little shocked to find he had to pay £40 over his budget on Bonhams' commission.

A handless station clock alluding to *Hard Day's Night* sold for £5,400. A note from John Lennon to Yoko Ono saying "A woman's place is on the floor" failed to sell.



Dominic Clarke, 16, with his £380 poster. He had not budgeted for commission

Beastly job for a willing worker

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

FOR those with a desire to run away and join the circus, the advertisement at Coventry Jobcentre leapt out. They wanted a tiger trainer's assistant.

The successful applicant will earn £150 per week for duties including cleaning cages and feeding the tigers.

The advert, placed by The Circus Harlequin, formerly Gerry Cottler's Circus, was initially withdrawn after the Health and Safety Executive raised queries, but it eventually granted permission after accepting that the job was suitable for applicants.

In the interview, Martin Lacey, the circus owner, was forced to advertise his rather unusual vacancy in supermarkets in Coventry. "I didn't know where else to look for a trainee tiger trainer," he said.

The Circus Harlequin has been looking for a young person to train since their regular tamer left. The advert runs: "Tiger trainer's assistant required for touring circus. Duties include cleaning cages, feeding and watering tigers, letting tigers into the circus enclosure. Person would progress to presenting tigers in the circus ring. Applicants should have experience with livestock and have a keen interest in animals."

The successful applicant, who will preferably be young and attractive, will eventually be solely responsible for the animals' performance.

And of the risks, Mr Lacey said: "Tiger trainers will put himself in more danger driving to work every day than he will dealing with the tigers."

Duchess discloses caring character

BY KATHARINE KENNEDY

THE Duchess of Kent has disclosed that she makes weekly visits to a shelter for the homeless in London.

For the last four years, the duchess has spent two or three hours each week at the shelter. Day Centre's night shelter, serving food, washing and cleaning the residents. She also provides companionship to some of the 50 to 60 elderly residents who follow her to the shelter.

The Duchess agreed to be filmed at the centre for BBC television's *Mile 'You're' Walking* programme designed to encourage people to contribute to the homeless charity. In an interview for *The Sunday Express*, she is filmed cleaning and preparing food in the shelter. She explains the fulfilment she derives from her visits, which started after an official visit a few years ago.

"Before I started here I was actually feeling quite nervous about how they would find me," she said. "I like to come here once a week. I am lucky. I live in London. I have the time and it's easy for me. I like getting to know the clients."

She ends the film by calling for others to volunteer. There's a great deal of joy and fun in caring for these people and we all get on so well."

CORRECTION

A leading article yesterday wrongly stated that Helmut Kohl received the freedom of the City on Tuesday.

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Patriot for whom principle was all

Alan Hamilton and Emma Wilkins on the funeral of Enoch Powell

ENOCH POWELL was not a man who invited consensus, and it was no surprise that his formal, moving and packed funeral service in St Margaret's, Westminster, yesterday attracted a few unconventional frills around the fringes.

An admirer had placed a small bunch of red, white and blue flowers on the grass by the church door, with a paper Union flag and a postcard map of Britain poking from the blooms. The postcard read: "Enoch Powell, you were right: the country is now going to the dogs. Ninety per cent of the people I know say you should have been PM."

Inside St Margaret's, the obsequies were more conventional. The church was filled beyond its 650 capacity, and many mourners stood at the back as Mr Powell's coffin, draped in a Union flag and surmounted by a wreath of white lilies, was processed from St Faith's chapel in Westminster Abbey, where it had lain in rest overnight. He had earned his night in the Abbey, and his service in the parish church of Parliament, because he had been a regular worshipper at both.

In his address, Lord Biffen, the former Tory MP and once a close political ally of Mr Powell, said: "He did not achieve power, but more important he achieved influence and respect on a scale which perhaps only history will come



Mourners: John Major and Denis Thatcher

to recognise." For Mr Powell, principle always seemed to stand in the way of preferment, Lord Biffen said. He became a compelling orator. "Nonetheless, his parliamentary skill did not lead to corresponding political preferment. The snakes matched the ladders. He felt obliged to resign from the Treasury in 1958. Five years later, he declined to serve under Alex Home. As always, it was a point of principle."

After the Tory defeat in 1964, Lord Biffen said, Mr Powell became a much more trenchant advocate of free enterprise and the market economy. He was ten years ahead of Margaret Thatcher. And always, there was the latent British national factor.

"Denis Healey has recently described Enoch Powell as 'a nationalist'. That is true, but it was not an emotion of nostalgia or romanticism, and certainly did not bear the stamp of racial superiority or xenophobia," Lord Biffen said.

But Mr Powell would be remembered for a speech on immigration in Birmingham in 1968, in which he alluded to the Tiber flowing with blood. Lord Biffen said: "Powell believed that the prospective size and concentration of New Commonwealth immigration would lead to unacceptable tensions and violence. The speech had a profound national impact and it transformed the public perception of Enoch Powell." Then there was his stance on Europe.

Lord Biffen described him as, in a sense, "a British Gaullist favouring a Europe which was a partnership of nation states".

The young Mr Powell had enlisted as a private soldier in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1939 and had risen quickly to the rank of brigadier. Lord Biffen recalled that Mr Powell was told to calculate the likely speed of Montgomery's advance towards El Alamein. For once, he underestimated, eliciting a message from Monty to headquarters: "Tell that young man that I am doing better than he thought I would."

Mourners sang the rousing hymns of an Anglican funeral, heard his daughter Susan Day read from Ecclesiastes and his archivist Richard Ritchie read from his beloved A.E. Housman, at whose feet he had studied at Cambridge.

His widow, children and four grandchildren led a congregation that was filled with at least two Tory generations. From John Major, Michael Portillo, Michael Howard and Jonathan Aitken to such figures of the Thatcher era as Lords Parkinson, Deedes and Molyneux, the latter representing Mr Powell's second career as an Ulster Unionist, along with the UUP's leader, David Trimble. The Queen was represented by Lord Charteris of Amisfield, one of her past private secretaries.



Enoch Powell's coffin being carried from St Mary's yesterday. He was buried at Warwick Cemetery

The Government was to have been represented by Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, but she was too busy and sent her junior minister, Tony Worthington. Otherwise, Labour representation was exceedingly thin, except for that other old and unconventional parliamentary warhorse, Tony Benn. And, as expected, Mr Powell's

adversary, Sir Edward Heath, was absent.

At the end of the 50-minute service, Mr Powell's coffin was taken to a hearse and followed by two coachloads of mourners, set off on for a second funeral service in Warwick. There, more than 600 people gathered in the Collegiate Church of St Mary, which was chosen by Mr

Powell's family because it houses the chapel of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Under the garter banner of Montgomery, who was also a member of the regiment, Mr Powell's coffin was borne along the nave by six soldiers. After a reading from Jennifer Lavin, Mr Powell's daughter, the address was given by Sir Patrick Cormack, MP.

He paid tribute to the devotion shown by Mr Powell's widow, Pam, as her husband fought against Parkinson's disease, and to his two daughters. The burial took place privately at Warwick Cemetery, where many members of the regiment are buried.

William Rees-Mogg, page 20
Letters, page 21

How desert trek led to a passion for hunting

By MAGNUS LINKLATER

ONE of the most intriguing stories about Enoch Powell's past has emerged from a collection of military anecdotes in which he had previously been unnamed.

During the Second World War desert campaign, Powell, a 31-year-old lieutenant colonel on the General Staff, needed to get from Algiers to headquarters in Cairo. The only transport he could find was a 30cwt truck. His companion for the journey was a 24-year-old Scots major, Michael Strachan.

They faced a 3,000-mile journey taking at least two weeks and Powell, despite having a licence, had never learnt to drive. Strachan later wrote an account of the journey in *Blackwood's Magazine*. He christened Powell "The Professor" and, until now, had never revealed publicly who the character was. Powell had difficulty mastering the controls of the

truck, which they nicknamed Pinalofe. Strachan wrote: "Instead of slowing down, he suddenly accelerated, at the same time swaying about in his seat as though wrestling for possession of the wheel."

It took three accidents, including a collision with an army lorry, for Powell to get the hang of Pinalofe's controls. After that the two men shared the driving.

Since they faced long days and nights together, Strachan proposed that The Professor should teach him something about the Classics. He agreed, providing Strachan shared his knowledge about something of which Powell was ignorant. The discovery that The Professor had never ridden a horseback resulted in agreement to his talking exclusively on horses and hunting," Strachan wrote.

Powell was fascinated by Strachan's knowledge of the novels of R.S. Surtees and his

hunting hero, Jorrocks, who defined the sport as "the image of war without its guil and only five-and-twenty per cent of its danger". Powell announced: "I've made up my mind. I shall hunt."

They did not meet again until many years later. Strachan, who became chairman of the Ben Line Steamers Company and the National Library of Scotland, spotted Powell on a London-bound train one December evening. "He was wearing a bowler hat with a mud-smeared den in it, a black cutaway coat with a muddled shoulder and mud-spattered breeches and boots."

Strachan, now 79 and living near Peebles, learnt the Powell had taken four falls the course of a day's hunting but was undaunted. "I'm inclined to think that 25 per cent of the danger is an understatement," he said, "but my luc holds."

Sands of time halt Dunkirk veterans

By A CORRESPONDENT

DUNKIRK veterans are surrendering to the advance of years. Their association is to be wound up in 2000 after a last visit to the scene of their wartime ordeal.

Jim Horton, general secretary of the 1940 Dunkirk Veterans' Association, said: "It was an overwhelming vote in favour. We don't just want to fade away. We want to go out with dignity."

The association once had more than 100,000 members. Now there are 7,000, of whom the youngest is 78. Those with strength to travel will make the annual pilgrimage to Dunkirk in 2000 and then decide on a fitting ceremony formally to end their association.

Mr Horton, 78, who was a medic with the 5th British Infantry Division, said: "The camaraderie will last for as long as we are alive, but many of our members cannot get to meetings any more. We cannot go on for ever. Closure is inevitable."

The result disappointed some veterans. Joe Lann, 79, chairman and founder of the branch in Salisbury, said: "I don't think we should give up. There are enough of us. The comradeship is important the older you get. If we had not got off the beaches, Britain would have lost the war."

Captain Francis Hebert, 82, a Royal Artillery medical officer who treated many soldiers at a first-aid post on the beaches, said: "I am very disappointed, but I am not surprised. We are a declining band. We all getting older."

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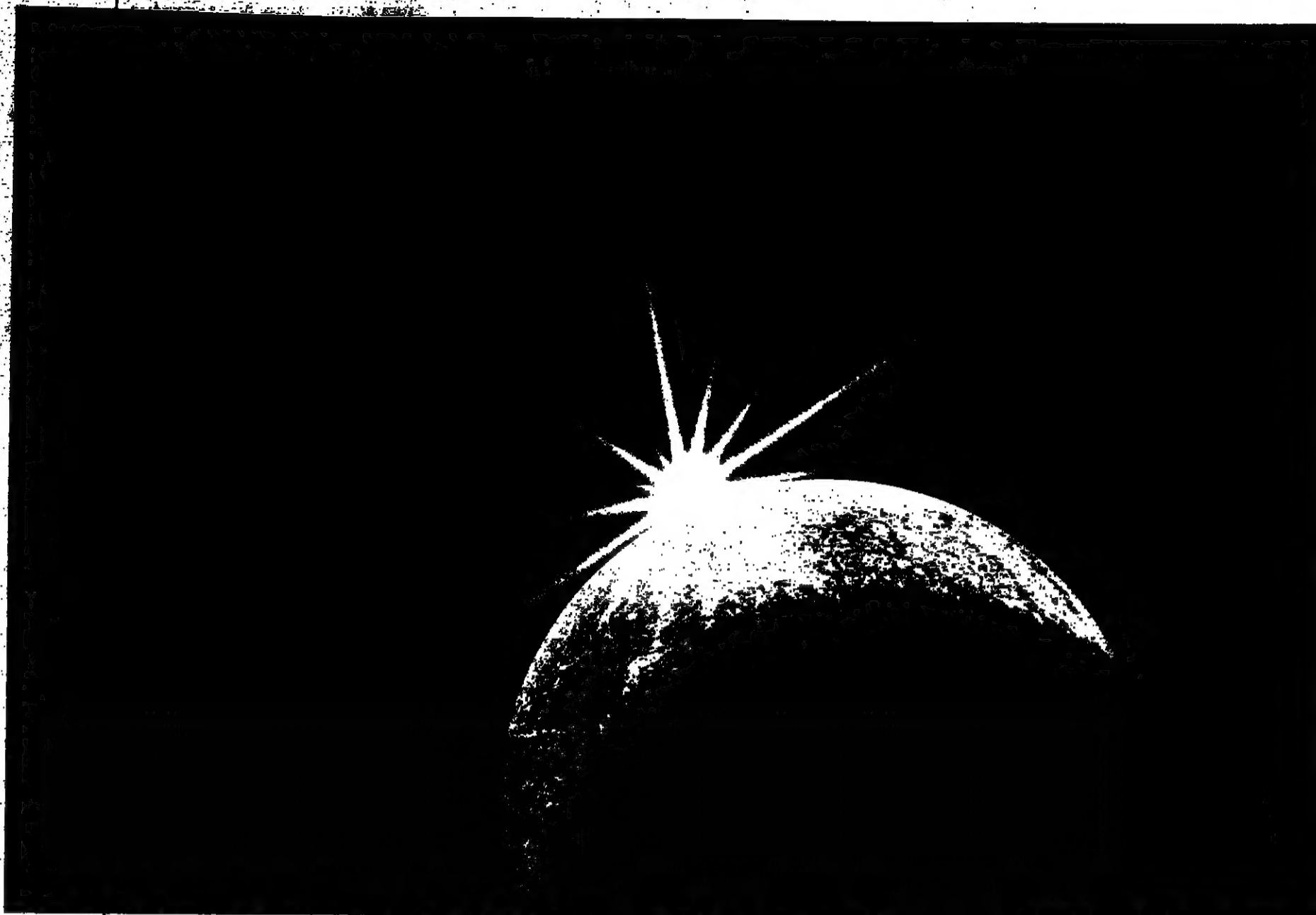
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The difference is Merrill Lynch.

Spring babies more likely to hit the heights

COUPLES wanting a tall son or daughter should plan their baby for the spring rather than the autumn. Scientists have found that children born in April end up being taller than those born in October.

Researchers have linked the extraordinary finding with the increasing changes in the intensity of sunlight to which the mother and newborn are exposed. They believe that babies born in springtime may be getting extra doses of growth hormone during key periods, when compared with their autumnal peers.

The findings, published in *Nature*, are based on 507,125 men aged 18 called up by the Austrian Army. Hermann Prossinger, a member of the team from the Institute of Human Biology at the University of Vienna, said the beauty of the research was the numbers involved.

"In Austria all youths of the age of 18 must register with the Army where they undergo a medical. With the exception of a few evaders, everyone is recorded. If our result was based on just one year then there might be questions but it is over ten years," he said.

This also means that the study balances out the effects of altitude, cloudy versus sunny years, social and economic backgrounds and potential differences due to urban and rural living.

The study found that, on average, babies born at the beginning of April are 0.6 centimetres taller at the age of 18 than those born at the beginning of October. Overall,

A study shows babies are bigger if they get more sunlight. Nick Nuttall sizes up the arguments

children born between January and July are taller than those born between July and December by about 0.3 centimetres.

The scientists have two theories to explain the phenomenon. One is linked with the way changing light levels affect production of a hormone called melatonin at key growth moments in the foetus and newborn. "Human growth goes in spurts. These spurts are greatest three months before and three months after birth," Dr Prossinger said.

In northern Europe, including Austria and Britain, sunlight levels and length of the day increase sharply from around the beginning of February. This coincides with the growth spurt in the womb for the babies born in April. They also benefit from increasing sunlight during their next growth spurt.

Research, including some published in *Science* in January, has shown that levels of melatonin in the body are influenced by changes in light exposure. The body senses

light through the eyes but also through the skin, including areas at the back of the knee. Another member of the team, Gerhard Weber, has carried out research suggesting that the melatonin triggers extra production of human growth hormone.

Dr Prossinger said the other theory was more speculative. An April-born baby would have been conceived in July, which coincides with the maximum levels of solar radiation. "So the difference in heights may have to do with the quality of the egg at ovulation and conception," he said.

Mike Clark of the National Radiological Protection Board in Didcot, Oxfordshire, said yesterday that another way of confirming the effect might be to look at people living in tropics, where fluctuations in sunlight levels are negligible.



Little and large: Lord Hurd and Ronnie Corbett

Measuring the long and the short of it

THE heightened effects of a spring versus an autumn or winter birth might be seen in the relative statures of Lord Hurd of Westwell, the former Foreign Secretary, and Ronnie Corbett, the comedian (Nick Nuttall writes).

Lord Hurd was born in March 1938, close to the peak month for light, boosting height. He is, according to his office, "about 6ft 2in". Mr Corbett, born in December 1930, is "3ft, give or take a few inches", according to his agents.

However, the comedian John Cleese illustrates how genes rather than birth month also play a crucial role. Born in October 1939, he is 6ft 4in. Helena Bonham Carter, the actress, also appears to buck the trend shown by the Austrian research. Born in May 1966, she is 5ft 3in. At least one famous Austrian and former army officer also disproves the theory. Born in April 1889, Adolf Hitler was only 5ft 6in, according to those who met him.

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES

Daniel Day-Lewis on learning to box

plus WILL SELF AND KATE MUIR

REVEALED
The top classic cult moment

Criminal tendency is all in the jeans

By Nick Nuttall
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

WELL-WORN jeans may be about to go out of fashion among the criminal fraternity, after the discovery that each pair has a unique pattern of wear that may be almost valuable as fingerprints.

The breakthrough was used by the FBI after a series of bank robberies in Spokane, Washington. Richard Vorder Bruegge, an FBI forensic scientist, enlarged a security picture of a masked member of the gang and noticed lines running across the seam of his jeans.

The pattern had been formed by slight imperfections when the jeans were made. Workers sew seams on trousers by pushing fabric through a machine which stretches and bunches the material. The dyed layer of cotton in the raised areas wears away faster, leaving unique white bands or patterns along the seam.

The patches are more striking on jeans because they often become extremely worn. "People just keep wearing them," Dr Vorder Bruegge says in *New Scientist* magazine.

The jeans of all suspects were studied, and one pair had a pattern with more than 24 features that matched the jeans worn at the robbery. The FBI proved in court that it could distinguish one pair out of 34 samples, and the man was convicted.

Why grass is greener on the other side

By OUR TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A SMALL patch of Wimbledon's Centre Court is being bathed in artificial sunlight in an experiment that could have important implications for other large stadiums.

Groundsmen are keen to see if the lamps, designed to stimulate photosynthesis, can promote healthy grass growth even in shady spots. Problems have arisen in recent years as bigger stadiums have created larger areas of shade. Grass starved of light grows taller and more straggly, weakening roots and making it less durable. *New Scientist* magazine reports.

Andy Newell, of the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, Yorkshire, said: "Spectators expect to be cosseted. They want to be warm and dry under a roof and close to the pitch. But designers forget the simple biological principle that grass does not grow in the dark. Ninety-nine per cent of new grounds have shade problems."

The lamps at the All England Lawn Tennis Club produce extra amounts of yellow and blue light. Eddie Seaward, Wimbledon's head groundsman, said that early findings were promising.

If the experiment is successful, the club is considering placing lamps around the courts, linked to light sensors and a computer, to ensure that all areas of the turf get the same level of "sunlight".

£50,000 sunk into soft investigation

By Paul Wilkinson

SCIENTISTS have been given £50,000 to investigate a series of apparently simple but actually baffling problems. Such as why does margarine spread more easily than butter.

The researchers also want to discover why shaving foam loses its shape when squirted from its can, why skin cream stiffens when exposed to air and why bread dough sinks. They hope that their study of "soft matter" will help to improve products from food to engine oil.

Scientists from universities around the country and companies such as ICI and Unilever will work on the project, which is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The team leader, Peter

Olmsted of Leeds University's physics and astronomy department, said: "These may seem like simple problems but they are not easy to solve. Shaving foam consists of, among other things, water and soap and when it comes out of the can it looks fine, but after a while it just sinks and loses its mass. We will be trying to discover just why it does that in the hope that one day it will lead to a longer-lasting product. This research has wide-ranging applications for a lot of major companies."

He said that companies often spent years trying to perfect their products, succeeding only through trial and error. "We know that a lot of these things happen but we don't know exactly why."

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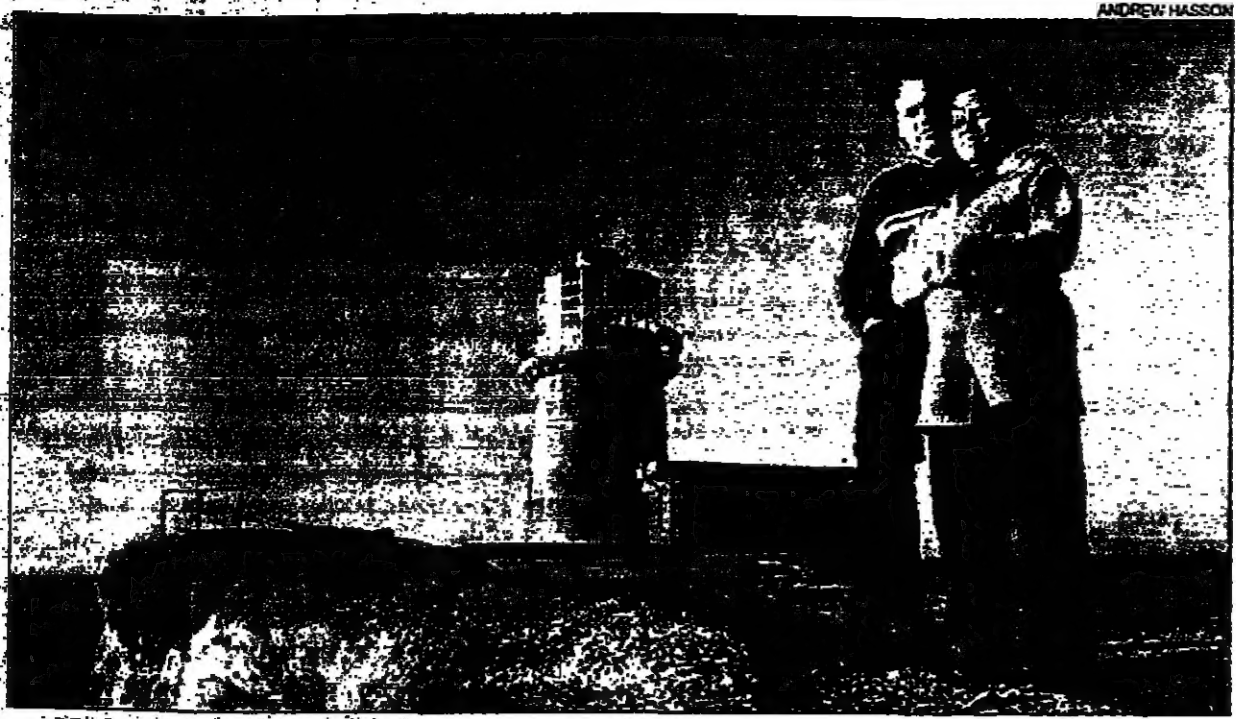
By Helen Johnston

THE future of an historic lighthouse, left tottering on the edge of Beachy Head, has been secured after the local authority backed a scheme to move it out of danger.

The Belle Tout, which was built 167 years ago, is the only residential lighthouse in the country. It was once used to entertain George V, but is now on the verge of collapsing into the sea because of coastal erosion.

Mark and Louise Roberts, the owners, are now hoping to secure a lottery grant to help to pay part of the £250,000 needed to lift the building with hydraulic jacks and push it back 50ft on rails.

Mr Roberts, 32, said work would start in September and should take six days. The lighthouse, a six-bedroom Grade II listed building, was used as the setting for the BBC's 1980 dramatisation of



Mark and Louise Roberts on Beachy Head. Their lighthouse, the Belle Tout, is only 25ft from the edge

Fay Weldon's *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil*. It has a dramatic view of the Channel from the cliff top near Eastbourne, but is now only 25ft from the edge.

Maurice Skidson, of Eastbourne council's planning committee, said: "This operation will safeguard the light-

house. This is a significant building and we must save it for future generations."

The Belle Tout was closed as a lighthouse nearly 100 years ago because mist often obscured its lantern. After construction of the current Beachy Head lighthouse at the foot of the 500ft chalk

cliffs, it was sold to Sir James Purves-Stewart, who entertained the King there. The building, which was almost destroyed during the Second World War when it was used for target practice, was restored in 1955.

It will be moved by the Watford-based construction

company Pynford, which will dig underneath and construct a layer of reinforced concrete. The structure will then be raised by 2ft and lowered on to rails, which will carry it 50ft inland. Mr Roberts, a hotelier and restaurateur, then plans to open it to the public.

Shop staff suffer as robbers seek easier targets

SHOP staff are suffering a wave of robberies and attacks as criminals regard them as easy targets, a study showed yesterday. Violence rose by 44 per cent last year and robberies by 42 per cent.

Robbers have been switching away from banks and building societies which have improved their security, and increasingly target petrol stations, off-licences, jewellers and stores that offer financial services, according to a survey by British Retail Consortium.

Staff in chemists' shops were the most likely to be assaulted, with 34 attacks per 1,000 staff last year. Bill Connor, general secretary of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, called for more surveillance equipment to protect staff, and said that longer hours were partly to blame: "Extended opening

Long hours and poor surveillance are blamed for robberies and attacks, reports Stewart Tandler

hours have undoubtedly contributed to the number of violent incidents, particularly drug and alcohol-related crimes."

The figures released yesterday are the fifth crime survey by the consortium, which covers 90 per cent of the nation's shops and retail groups. The number of robberies totalled 17,000 at a total cost of £46 million.

There were 13,000 cases of violence. The number of threats rose by 13 per cent to 53,000, and verbal abuse rose by 3 per cent to 124,000 cases.

At the same time, thefts by shoplifters and staff both fell, although such crime in Britain's shops is still estimated to be costing every household in the country £85 a year.

Shoplifting fell by 14 per cent to 4.28 million cases, and the value of the goods taken fell by 7 per cent to £608 million. The consortium's study found that shops were getting tougher with thieves; a record 70 per cent of the 1.2 million offenders caught by staff were

handed over to the police. Despite the drop, the report showed that there was an incident of shoplifting every three seconds.

The report expressed concern about the large numbers of young people involved in crime. Juvenile thieves make up nearly a quarter of all offenders in supermarkets, 38 per cent of thieves in chemists' and beauty shops, and 48 per cent of the thieves in music retailers.

Thefts by staff fell by 16 per cent to 26,000 cases, but still cost retailers £374 million.

Burglaries, including break-ins and ramraids, have halved in the past five years to 87,000 incidents, costing shops £155 million. The consortium said that small shops outside inner cities and town centres were particularly vulnerable. Independent shops were twice as likely to be burgled as the chain stores. They were less likely to have surveillance cameras.

Overall, there was an attack or threat of an attack every minute of the working day. Ann Robinson, director general of the consortium, said that the rise in violence against staff was horrific and reflected a general trend towards a more violent society.

The worst effects were suffered by the small shop-owners, who worked long hours and lived above the premises with their families, she said. The whole family could be traumatised by crime.

Manager held hostage in home

By Stewart Tandler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A GANG who attacked a young woman store manager in her home, beat her to get information and then burgled the store were condemned as "vicious animals" yesterday by Michael O'Brien, a Home Office minister.

He was speaking at a press conference on retail crime as Scotland Yard's Flying Squad hunted the burglars. The gang stole more than £10,000 from a branch of Argos in Wembley, North London, after extracting security information from the manageress.

The woman, in her 20s, was attacked when she arrived home in Harrow, North London, at 9pm last Saturday with her mother. The gang, wearing balaclavas, had broken in and were waiting for her.

The manageress was handcuffed and hit on the head to force her to give the gang security information. Her mother was also beaten. The two women were held overnight while two of the gang



O'Brien said the gang had acted like animals

went to the store early on Sunday morning. Using the woman's keys, the burglars struck before staff arrived, emptying the safe of Saturday trading cash. The third man stayed with the two women and then fled just after 8.30am.

Scotland Yard said the two women were not seriously hurt. An Argos spokeswoman, who would not name the woman or go into any details about the theft, said the incident had been distressing.

Judge calls for acquittal in rhino horn case

By Adam Fresco

THE case against a legal executive accused of conspiring to sell rhino horns worth almost £3 million on the black market collapsed yesterday. Judge Peter Langan, QC, said there was no evidence against Paul Rextrewe to suggest that he had known he was helping in the sale of rhino horns, which are a restricted species. He ordered the jury at King's Lynn Crown Court to return a not guilty verdict against Mr Rextrewe, 45, from Wimbledon.

Four others have already admitted the offence and will be sentenced next month. They are Carol Scotchford-Hughes, 50, from Willingham, Cambridgeshire; David Eley, 54, and Elaine Arscott, 40, from Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire; and Wilfred Bull, 62, who is serving life for murder and was said to be the mastermind behind the plan.

It was alleged that Mr Rextrewe had agreed to launder some of the £2.8 million from the horns through his London firm of solicitors. The jury was told that Bull wrote letters instructing his co-conspirators on how to handle the sale. Judge Langan said: "There is nothing to prove that the defendant knew the subject matter of the deal was rhino horn."

Big rise in detection of jail drug smuggling

By Richard Ford

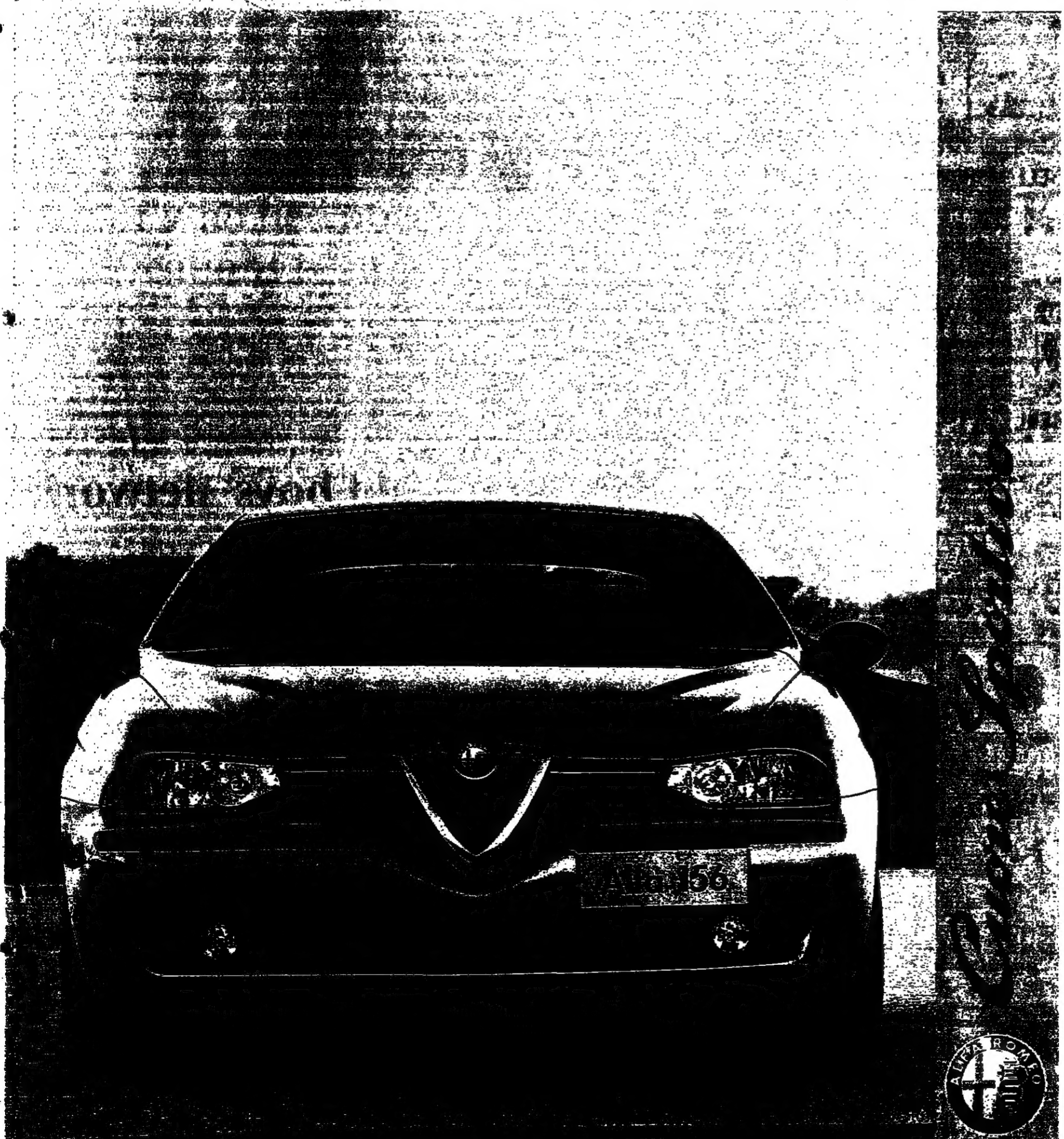
THE number of people caught attempting to smuggle illegal drugs into jails in England and Wales has risen fivefold during the past five years, according to Prison Service figures. More than 1,100 men and women were caught trying to take drugs into the 135 jails last year, compared with 229 in 1991-92.

The rise coincides with the Prison Service introducing tougher searching procedures after the breakouts from Whitemoor and Parkhurst top-security jails.

The prison with the biggest number of people arrested was Feltham Young Offender Institution in West London, where 130 people were detained.

George Howarth, the minister with responsibility for drugs, said the Prison Service did not record what action had been taken against those caught, or how many of those detained were professional visitors rather than relatives or friends.

Mr Howarth also disclosed that more than 22,500 known drug addicts are in prisons in England and Wales in the twelve months to March 31, 1997. The figure is likely to be a huge underestimate as it does not include those who have not registered.



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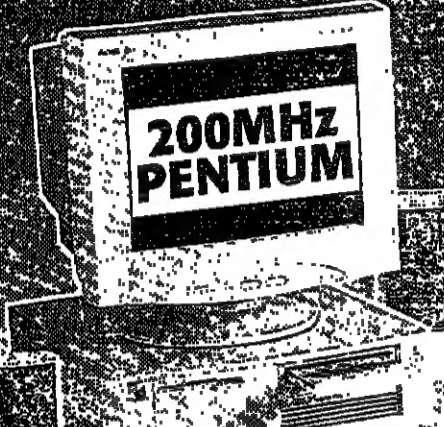
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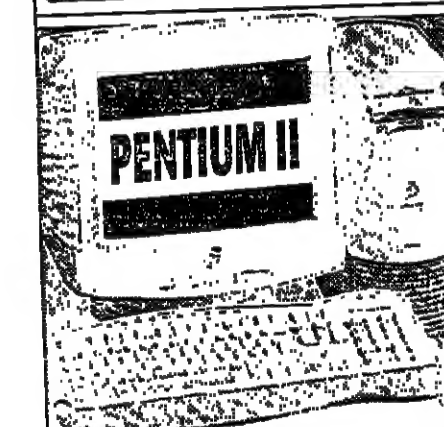
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Prince's spin-doctor battled for Brittan

New recruit to the Palace learnt her craft during the Westland affair, reports Valerie Elliott

THE first black recruit to the senior ranks of the Prince of Wales's staff learnt her spin-doctoring skills during the Westland crisis that nearly brought down Margaret Thatcher's premiership.

Colleen Harris, 42, was named yesterday as deputy press secretary to the Prince after being poached from the office of John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, where she is head of media planning and co-ordination.

Last night she went out for a celebration meal with her husband, Wayne, who runs his own electronic business in South London.

Mrs Harris was the first black press officer to work at Downing Street when she was recruited by Sir Bernard Ingham to work for Mrs Thatcher, and is resigned to the focus on her colour.

"I accept that it's news to have a black member of the Prince of Wales's Household. But I think that's where the news starts and where it ends," she said. "I am used to it, but I think it's rather sad."

Before working at No 10, she landed a post at the Department of Trade and Industry press office and was able to watch her boss, Colette Bowe, deal with the intricacies of the Westland affair on behalf of Sir Leon Brittan, their Cabinet minister.

She has told friends that she is particularly concerned that the spotlight on her colour might affect her two sons, aged nine and seven, and her parents, who originally came from Guyana and are now retired. She will probably start her new job after Easter.

The Prince's office yesterday said Mrs Harris was the best person for the job. "His Royal Highness is, of course, delighted



Colleen Harris, 42, appointed deputy press secretary to the Prince of Wales

that he has been able to recruit someone from the ethnic community, but Colleen has been recruited for her experience, skills and her personality, and not her ethnicity."

The Prince already employs a secretary and an orderly who come from ethnic-minority backgrounds. The Queen last summer recruited a young Asian woman with experience in finance and management to work in the co-ordination and research unit of the Queen's private office, Buckingham Palace recruits about 5 per cent of ethnic-minority staff in more junior administrative or domestic jobs.

Mrs Harris said: "I was interviewed by the Prince and he was very considerate. He's obviously used to meeting nervous people. But he was concerned about my family and the effect the appointment and publicity might have on them." The Prince readily agreed that she should arrange her work to accommodate family commitments.

Mrs Harris, who is to earn about £35,000 a year, is the daughter of a pharmacist. She attended a grammar school in Battersea, South London, and qualified as a primary school teacher. She met her husband during a summer holiday job at a bingo hall when she was 20.

A spell as a clerk in the British Museum press office led to her first press office role at the Natural History Museum. But a secondment to the Home Office press office, one of the busiest in Government, whetted her appetite for the political hurly-burly.

"It was an eye-opener. I was hooked on the buzz and determined to get into it," she said.

MPs attack old boys' network

By Valerie Elliott

MPs were deeply critical yesterday of the Public Appointments Commissioner's apparent lack of urgency in breaking the grip of white, middle-aged, middle-class men on quangos.

They demanded an overhaul of the appointments system and attacked Sir Len Peach's lack of enthusiasm to move away from "the club" of men who were chosen to sit on public bodies, tribunals and NHS trusts. The MPs said ministers should give up their power of patronage and advertise not just salaried posts, but those with prestige and influence, such as

the Royal Fine Arts Commission or the Arts Council. Appointments to government taskforces — there have been 22 set up since Labour came to power — should be opened up.

The committee at Westminster also suggested that they might study appointments to public corporations such as the BBC Board of Governors and the role of the Prime Minister's appointments secretary.

Peter Bradley, Labour MP for The Wrekin, accused the Government of "staffing quangos from the 19th hole" and Rhodri Morgan, chairman of the Commons public administration committee,

which last night criticised 65-year-old Sir Len — a regular on government committees — called for a new breed of quango appointees. He said it was time to end the system of selecting people for their political loyalties or because they were among "the great and good".

The committee also called on Sir Len to step up efforts to find younger people, both men and women, and people from the ethnic minorities.

Last night Sir Len said: "I am not pleased by the personal comments and I feel they are undeserved. I was surprised by the charge in the report that I was unambitious and complacent."

Sex scandal minister to become missionary

By Gillian Harris, Scotland Correspondent

A WOMAN minister who resigned after admitting a sexual relationship with a married church elder is to become a Quaker missionary in South Africa.

Helen Percy, 32, resigned as assistant minister to six rural parishes in Perthshire at the end of last year to avoid having to defend herself at a Church of Scotland trial.

Miss Percy, who lives in Kilry, Perthshire, was suspended last summer when it was revealed that she had a sexual relationship with Sandy Nicholl, 52.

Mr Nicholl admitted that he had had sex with Miss Percy on one occasion. Miss Percy later discovered she was pregnant and had an abortion. She claimed Mr Nicholl had raped her, although she did not press charges. When he confirmed that he had not consented, he was accused of covering for her. He and his wife, Moyra, separated soon after the claims were made public.

Miss Percy, a popular if unconventional preacher who once conducted a sermon wearing a Snoopy nightdress, held an "excommunication party" in Kilry village hall two weeks ago for 100 friends and supporters.

On her decision to go to Cape Town, she said: "A friend suggested it would be a great opportunity for me. It has been a difficult and stressful few months and I want to put all of that behind me."

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Parents want inquiry over surgery deaths

THE parents of dozens of children who died or suffered brain damage after heart operations yesterday picketed the disciplinary hearing at which the surgeons involved are accused of professional misconduct.

Carrying lighted candles and white carnations, the parents stood outside the General Medical Council offices in London behind 50 tiny black coffins and beneath a banner saying "GMC: Great Massacre Cover-up". They want a public inquiry to look into what they claim is a far greater number of deaths and mistakes than the GMC is investigating.

The parents then went on to Downing Street to hand in a petition calling for an inquiry into what went on at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, where their children were treated.

They staged their picket as the disciplinary committee of the GMC began hearing the defence case of James Wisheart, the consultant surgeon in charge of the operations. Mr Wisheart and Janardan Dhasmana, another consultant surgeon, and John Roylance, former chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, have denied charges of serious professional misconduct.

The charges concern two types of open-heart surgery carried out on 55 children at the hospital. Twenty-nine of

Critics say a GMC hearing into alleged misconduct does not go far enough, reports Ian Murray

them died and one child brain damage. The parents claim that at least 55 other children died and 13 suffered serious brain damage after different heart operations at the hospital. The GMC, after an internal inquiry into the background, has decided to carry out its disciplinary inquiry into only the two types of operation.

"This is a complete cover-up and the medical profession is closing ranks to hide the truth," claimed Jim Stewart,



James Wisheart arriving at the GMC yesterday

whose four-year-old son, Ian, has serious brain damage after an operation at the hospital in 1993.

Malcolm Curnow, a Devon policeman whose daughter died in 1990 after heart surgery at the hospital, said: "Up to 1,000 children have been exposed to unnecessary risk during the period under investigation by the GMC. We have had enough of secrecy. We want an independent public inquiry to ask how many children died or were brain damaged between 1983 and 1995. We don't know the scale of this tragedy."

Mr Wisheart told the GMC's disciplinary committee yesterday that more and more operations were carried out on children under a year old because new techniques made this possible.

Because there were so few open-heart operations requiring a switch of the main arteries — one of the procedures being investigated — he had decided that all of them should be done by Dr Dhasmana so that he could build up experience.

Dr Wisheart said he held regular meetings to discuss the hospital's performance

and cases where patients had died. For one difficult operation the Bristol figures were in line with the national averages for 1985-89 and 1992-95. In 1990 and 1991, there was a "small number of excess deaths", he admitted, but said new procedures had put that right.

He told the committee he could not remember being told about a letter from Stephen Bolsin, an anaesthetist, drawing attention to the number of deaths from heart operations on young children.

Mr Wisheart said he was unaware that Dr Bolsin was carrying out a medical audit of heart operations. When he eventually saw the audit, he said he found "one glaring error" of 500 per cent in one set of the figures.

Mr Wisheart is charged with carrying out 15 hole-in-the-heart operations when he was not clinically competent to do so. Nine of the babies died. Mr Wisheart is also accused of misinforming parents about the risks involved.

Mr Dhasmana is charged with lacking the competence to carry out 38 arterial switch operations, following which 20 of the children died and one became brain damaged.

Mr Roylance is accused of ignoring warnings that the surgeons' work was below standard and of not using his authority to prevent them operating.

The hearing continues.



Teresa Sycamore, whose son, Ross Anderson, died at the age of five months

Doctor who lied about his qualifications is struck off

By JOANNA BAILEY

A DOCTOR who twice lied about his qualifications to secure senior academic positions at Bristol University was struck off by the General Medical Council yesterday.

Mark Williams also provided bogus research figures, falsely claimed to have had articles published and forged letters to secure grants for research projects.

He was found out when suspicious colleagues challenged him. Dr Williams, 43,

from Taunton, admitted nine allegations of misconduct.

Heather Norton, for the GMC, said that a curriculum vitae which resulted in his appointment as lecturer in public health medicine in 1991 falsely claimed that he had a Primary Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons from 1982. Two years later, he submitted a further CV for the post as senior lecturer, falsely claiming to hold a geriatric medicine qualification from 1986, an examination he did not pass until 1988. The same

CV contained a list of ten articles he claimed had been published. Only one was printed, some time after the CV was submitted.

A junior colleague became concerned because she believed the statistics quoted in Dr Williams's papers were misleading. Dr Williams said the papers had been dictated in a rush and the falsehoods were down to genuine error.

In September 1995, Dr Williams was again challenged by colleagues. He resigned in February 1996.

New opera threat by Kaufman

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Royal Opera House was told yesterday that it could face a second inquiry by a House of Commons select committee unless it takes up recommendations in the scathing report published last year.

Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the Culture Select Committee, said that, unless swift action were taken, "we could come back and have another inquiry. We are utterly free agents."

The Government and the Arts Council published responses yesterday to the report, largely reiterating their evidence to the select committee. Mr Kaufman said afterwards: "We reaffirm all our recommendations. We made recommendations about Mary Allen, the chief executive, and we still stand by those recom-

mendations." They included a call for Ms Allen to stand down. She, Lord Chadlington, who was then chairman, and the opera house board were picked out for particular criticism.

The report expressed disbelief that an institution handling £98 million over the past five years could not produce a monthly balance sheet and attacked management incompetence in finding temporary theatres during the 2½-year closure.

Mr Kaufman said that Covent Garden appeared to have made little progress since the report was published. He asked: "What are they doing about the deficit? It's absolutely essential we are told, as a lot of public money is involved. What are they doing about the closure? I've had

letters of complaint the whole time from people who've attended events."

He expressed surprise at the delay in appointing a new board of ten members. Three have been announced so far, two of which were reappointed from the original board.

Welcoming the appointment of Sir Colin Southgate as chairman, Mr Kaufman said: "I'm looking to him to move things swiftly. It can't go on like this. Taxpayers have no sympathy: £15 million of your money, my money and my constituents' money is involved. Why should they pay money for that? The situation is simply not acceptable. I've got to account to my constituents."

The Royal Opera House declined to comment.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Channel 'booze cruiser' jailed

A petrol station owner who persistently crossed the Channel buying drink and tobacco for friends and family was jailed for ten weeks yesterday.

Patrick Delaney, 56, of Forest Hill, Oxford, had admitted evading duty of £4,400. Maidstone Crown Court was told that, in August 1996, Delaney had ignored customs at Dover and driven off. Police later stopped him and found 37.5 kilograms of rolling tobacco for which he had paid £1,400 in Belgium. It was his tenth cross-Channel trip.

Siege explosion

A police inspector was seriously burnt when a man who had barricaded himself and three children into his house in Flint, North Wales, set off a gas explosion. The householder, another police officer and a gas worker were also injured.

Clockwork torch

A clockwork torch devised by Trevor Baylis, pioneer of the wind-up radio, will go on sale next month. The torch, weighing 4½ lb, has an inbuilt generator like the one used for the radio. It runs for an hour after a 20-second crank of a handle.

Train fire

Almost 1,000 commuters had to abandon a Gravesend-Charing Cross train when electrical equipment caught fire near St John's station in southeast London. They were delayed by 90 minutes but no one was hurt.

Video facts

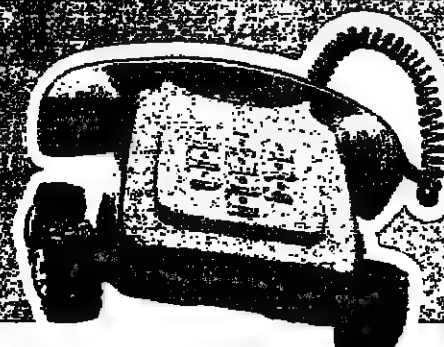
A total of £1.3 billion was spent last year renting or buying videos, a 3 per cent rise on 1996. The British Video Association said 162 million videos were rented. *Independence Day*, with 1.7 million sales, was the top seller.

Wallaby killed

A wallaby that escaped from a circus and spent three months roaming around Over Wallop, Hampshire, was killed when it leapt over a hedge and into the path of a car. Villagers had tried in vain to catch the animal.

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PENSIONS

Gulf War leaders urge caution over attacks

Saddam could emerge as overall victor, say veterans

By JAMES LANDALE, ANDREW PIERCE AND DANIEL MCGRORY

MILITARY commanders from the Desert Storm conflict and leading politicians are openly voicing their doubts about what another air strike in Iraq will achieve.

Several military figures, including General Norman Schwarzkopf, who led the Allied forces in 1991, fear that it will not affect Saddam Hussein's capability to produce chemical and biological weapons, and may split the international coalition.

Merrill MePeak, who commanded the air forces during Operation Desert Storm, said he doubted whether the military's latest and most accurate equipment could destroy Saddam's capacity to produce chemical and biological weapons. "I think there will be civilian casualties and that is a very unfortunate prospect," he said. "We have discriminating military instruments at hand, but there will be some unthought collateral damage. That's part of the action."

"We will probably lose some American pilots. And there is a risk of not achieving 100 per cent destruction of the programmes he has in place. We may get 30 per cent, or 30 per cent, maybe 20 per cent. It is hard to say."

Admiral Sir James Eberle, former Nato Commander-in-Chief Channel 1979-81 and former Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, said: "We have got ourselves into a mess. The risk of not achieving what I understand to be the purpose is considerable and the cost of failure will be very high indeed. This is a very risky venture."

"I have worries about the legitimacy in international law. The Americans seem to be saying that even if the United Nations Secretary

General is satisfied with a deal from Baghdad the US might still bomb him. The Americans are running a demonic policy."

"It is highly doubtful we can eradicate all that Saddam has, and what is to stop him from building up such stocks again after this action is over? The military and the politicians say they cannot remove him so surely it is his mind that needs changing and we should negotiate, not threaten."

General Sir Peter de la Billière, who commanded the

BA moves Kuwait jets

British Airways flights which usually terminate in Kuwait will now go on to Bahrain, after crews expressed concern. A BA spokesman said: "Our absolute priority is the safety of our passengers and crew." The airline was criticised after the Gulf War by passengers who were taken captive from a BA flight just before the invasion.

British forces in the Gulf War, said: "There are few, if any, examples of air power alone succeeding in defeating and bringing to heel such a determined and resolute enemy as Saddam."

He also said that anything short of a full-scale invasion with ground forces could enhance Saddam's prestige among his Arab neighbours at the expense of the UN and the British and American forces.

General Schwarzkopf said the United States risked getting dragged into a protracted conflict like Vietnam.

He said in that campaign the bombing campaign was escalated without achieving military or political goals.

He also predicted that a sustained bombing campaign would not force Saddam to comply with the United Nations' weapons inspections teams, and could jeopardise the fragile international coalition against the Iraqi leader. "He wants the sanctions lifted and if the coalition fractures he has a good chance of having the sanctions lifted. So he might not mind a big strike."

Flight Lieutenant John Nichol, whose Tornado was shot down on the first day of the Gulf War and who was tortured during the 42 days he spent in captivity, has reservations about what another bombing mission against Iraq might achieve. "Shall we bomb the mosques and palaces in civilian areas, which is almost certainly where Saddam will have hidden his store of chemical weapons?" he asked. "It is going to work against us."

Alan Clark, the former Tory Defence Minister, said: "The scene has much of the appearance of an impending retributive military action whose consequences have not been fully thought through. History shows that such actions can be the precursors of very long wars indeed."

Lord Gilmour of Craigmillar, a former Tory Defence Minister, told the Lords on Tuesday: "There is little doubt that air strikes will lead to a considerable increase in Islamic fundamentalism. It will do considerable damage to pro-Western regimes in the Arab world."

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Ann Leech with a portrait of her son, Fusilier Kevin Leech, who was killed by "friendly fire" in the Gulf War.

'Nothing is worth loss of a son'

By MARK HENDERSON

THE small Northumberland town of Prudhoe is urging the Government to show caution in using force in the Gulf.

On the run-down estates of the old coal mining town on the outskirts of Newcastle upon Tyne, residents with painful knowledge of the tragedies of modern warfare fear the consequences of military action against Iraq.

Prudhoe, where a generation of young men has struggled to find jobs since the mines closed, is prime recruiting territory for The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, the regiment that suffered the greatest casualties in the Gulf War.

Fusilier Kevin Leech, 20, was killed on February 26, 1991, when his Warrior armoured personnel carrier was hit by "friendly fire" from



Concerned: Audrey Ellington and Nicola Ogden

an American A10 warthog jet. Two other young men from the North-East, Paul Addison, 19, of Birtley near Gateshead, and Richard Gillespie, 19, of Tynemouth, also died in the incident, as did John Lang, a Scot who had settled in Newcastle and was engaged to marry a local girl. In the close-knit community, most people know a soldier.

Able Seaman Derek Armstrong, 22, another local son, was killed in action in the Falklands, when HMS Ardent was sunk in May 1982. Kevin Leech's father, Brian, said that while Saddam Hus-

sein was an evil tyrant, he was far from convinced that the present crisis was worth a further sacrifice of British lives. "For me, nothing's worth the loss of a life like my son's, even though it's clear Saddam is an idiot who can't be reasoned with."

Mr Leech, who has a second son, Mark, in the Fusiliers, said that military action should be considered only as a last resort and with one goal in mind - to topple Saddam Hussein. "A few air strikes will do nothing but cost lives. The job should have been finished last time." Still angry

that the Americans have yet to apologise for his son's death, Mr Leech cast doubt on their ability to act wisely. "I don't trust them, still. I think Saddam half wants them to bomb him. They could be falling into a trap."

The Rev Audrey Ellington, curate of St Mary Magdalene Church, where the funerals of Fusilier Leech and Able Seaman Armstrong were held, said the people of Prudhoe had developed a particularly acute awareness of the horrors of war. "A lot of boys do go into the Army if they are not going to university. Our town is more aware of the costs of war because of the two deaths."

Nicola Ogden, 19, who works in the town's tourist bureau, said: "The politicians need to consider it more carefully. If we use force, Saddam will fight back and it could end up being huge and very nasty. I know a few people from round here who went last time, and then there was Kevin Leech's plaque, which we would see at school. It certainly brings it all close to home and you think about it differently."

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Drink police fail to curb state's drunken ways

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN GURGAON

THE hard-drinking farming state of Haryana in northern India looks set to abandon a disastrous experiment in prohibition, which has left it nearly bankrupt. Even the temperance movement admits it has been a farce, a blow for puritans harbouring hopes of making India teetotal.

Voting in the general election, which will continue for several more days before counting starts on March 2, is partly a referendum on standards — essentially the decadent West versus the moral East. In Haryana, there is no contest. The West wins.

A beer or a chota peg is freely available, if expensive, despite the exertions of drink police who have developed a bloodhound's nose for alcohol. Many policemen are among the biggest bootleggers: if they are not peddling drink, they are extorting money to allow others to do so.

Gurgaon, bordering Delhi

INDIAN ELECTIONS

and Haryana, is the alcohol frontier. On the Delhi side a profusion of grubby drinking establishments... comes to people who travel sales for the novelty of imbibing. Without having to pay a policeman to go away. There is another motivation. Legally-made Indian rum and whisky may tear through the throat like broken glass, but it is safer than the firewater flowing out of scores of illegal village stills. People often die from it.

Haryana, like neighbouring Punjab (of which it used to be a part), has a well-earned reputation for drunkenness and domestic violence. This prompted the state government to launch a grassroots temperance movement, leading to prohibition nearly two years ago.

Punjab's drinking reputation is so well established it lent the name of one of its cities to describe a very large measure: a Patiala peg, a term still

in common use in the state and one much beloved by the British during the Raj to describe a hefty sundowner — the width of two fingers, carefully designated as the first and the fourth, ensuring a two-inch measure.

Sikhs, despite the exhortations of their faith, are among the nation's biggest drinkers, evidence for which is found in the number of accidents on the Grand Trunk Road, which cuts a deadly path through Punjab. It doubtless took the old maharajas of Patiala several large pegs to gain the courage for their annual picnic display, the central part of an annual festival.

Those who fought for prohibition want it abandoned because illegal liquor has spawned a crime wave. The countryside is full of small breweries. Gin stills are everywhere, and farmers have grown accustomed to buying their booze in plastic bottles or even plastic sachets. It costs more than legal drink ever did.



Women in Haryana, the force behind the state's temperance movement, queue to vote in the general election

Bootleggers sell brand name liquors for several times the normal shop price and the state government is reeling from the loss of excise duties. Roads are being neglected and other state services are crumbling. Everything from bus

fares to petrol have been increased in price to make up some of the shortfall.

Arya Samajis, one of the leaders of the anti-drink movement, says prohibition has been a disaster. "We removed one legal theka (brewery).

Now every house functions as an illegal one. We made a mistake. Rumour has it that brewing companies have been tempting politicians and others will huge bribes to abandon prohibition, which will happen as soon as the state

government feels it can find an appropriate excuse. The collapse of opposition to legal brewing seems to have provided it adequate justification. Before long, Haryana's farmers will doubtless be quaffing on their tractors once more.

Pensioner kicked to death for £15

FROM ROBERT WHIMMANT IN TOKYO

TWO schoolgirls have confessed to beating and kicking to death a pensioner who owed them 3,000 yen (£15) for comic books. Japanese police said yesterday.

The brutal murder of Tatsumi Yoshida, 69, is the latest in a wave of violent crimes by teenagers that has shocked Japan in recent weeks.

Police said the two girls, aged 14 and 15, had kicked and beaten the victim in a fit of rage on Tuesday after he refused to pay them money for comic books they had brought. Like many Japanese adults, Mr Yoshida was a fan of manga (comics), and paid the girls to deliver them to his door.

The schoolgirls, whose names were withheld, took a taxi to Mr Yoshida's council flat on Tuesday night and asked the driver to wait while they went inside. Police said they later came out weeping, and told the driver that "something is wrong with the old man". The driver went into the flat and found Mr Yoshida already dead.

Asian crisis casts pall over Deng's legacy of reforms

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

HUNDREDS of millions of Chinese will today mark the first anniversary of the death of Deng Xiaoping, the leader who changed their lives with capitalist-style economic reforms, even as they worry that the economic good times he ushered in may be fading.

Since his death at the age of 92, China has managed to avoid the instability that some had predicted would follow his passing. President Jiang Zemin, 71, has chosen his heir and successor: has been able to establish himself as leader of the Chinese Communist Party and the country. But fears are growing that the economic crises affecting the rest of East and South-East Asia will hurt China.

From 1978 Deng transformed China by initiating an "open door" economic policy with the rest of the world while maintaining strict political control at home. Mr Jiang has consolidated that hold on power.

Nevertheless, fears of an economic backlash are causing concern. "The Asian economic crisis was not anticipated at the time of Deng's death and it is casting

a shadow over China's short-term outlook and longer-term development. As Jiang looks around the regime, he must be worried," said a diplomat.

According to *China Daily*, growth is slowing as banks struggle under crushing debts and vital markets come under threat from East Asian export

crises whose consequences have been delayed. For the first time in years, legal money-changers have appeared on the streets of Beijing as the demand for dollars grows. Tens of millions of people are out of work and many forms of greeting, such as "Have you eaten yet?" and "Have you been laid off yet?", are the norm.

The *China Daily Business Weekly* says job security has become the main concern of Chinese workers for the first time since the Communist Party came to power in 1949.

In these times of hardship, even Deng's memory is no longer sacrosanct. There are plenty of detractors who say that, although he ushered in progress, his reforms brought corruption and a gap between rich and poor that did not exist in Mao's day.

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Round one goes to Oprah in 'mad cow' war with Texas ranchers



Oprah Winfrey: moved her show to Amarillo

SHE vowed never to eat another burger, but she did so without knowingly spreading lies. That was the decision of a Texas judge in the strange case of Oprah Winfrey and the cattlemen.

For nearly a month, lawyers for an angry group of cattle ranchers have tried to show that the talk show queen deliberately defamed American beef on a programme about "mad cow" disease. On Tuesday, Judge Mary Lou Robinson ruled that a statute, known in the Texas Panhan-

Amarillo's angry cattlemen are fighting on in their \$10 million "veggie libel" case despite an early victory by the queen of the talk shows, writes Giles Whittell

die as the "veggie libel law", had not been broken.

The judge stopped short of throwing out the case, but she handed Ms Winfrey a big victory in round one. She said the cattlemen, seeking \$10 million (\$5 million) in damages,

had failed to show that Ms Winfrey knowingly spread falsehoods in an episode in which an activist claimed "mad cow" disease could make AIDS look "like the common cold".

Ms Winfrey has moved her

entire broadcasting operation to the ranching town of Amarillo, where her trial has sorted diehard Oprah fans from loyal supporters of the cattle industry. A third group with feet in both camps has succumbed to the hostess's star appeal and joined the nightly rush for tickets to her programmes in a converted theatre.

The offending programme was broadcast in April 1996 at the height of Britain's beef crisis in which herds were slaughtered and the deaths of

23 people were linked to the disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Howard Lyman, an anti-meat campaigner, offered Ms Winfrey's audience a doomsday scenario should the disease take hold in America. She replied: "That's it. It has just stopped me cold from eating another burger."

Paul Engler, an Amarillo cattle-feed merchant, sued the programme under a controversial law designed to protect the perishable food industries from libel. Claiming that cattle-futures prices dropped by

10 per cent the day after the broadcast, he gave evidence that "the Oprah Winfrey show was the bomb that set it all off".

He may yet win, but the hearing continued yesterday as a normal business defamation case in which the cattlemen must prove that Ms Winfrey acted with malice. "Short of Oprah getting up on the witness stand and saying, 'Yes, yes, I wanted to hurt the cattle industry', how do you prove malice?" one legal expert asked.

Starr calls Clinton confidant to testify

THE Monica Lewinsky investigation moved a significant step closer to President Clinton yesterday as the man who for decades has operated as his most loyal adviser was questioned by a federal grand jury in Washington.

Bruce Lindsey, the deputy White House counsel, has known the President for 30 years and has been a personal protector since Mr Clinton's days as Arkansas Governor.

The title belies the power that Mr Lindsey wields inside the White House. He is a spectre who rarely attends meetings or writes memorandums, a sensible precaution during a subpoena-filled second term, and instead deals directly with the President.

He is the single aide who is always at Mr Clinton's side on important trips, who plays Hearts late into the night with the President and who, more often than not, will have the final say in any appointment to the inner circle.

Most important of all is his reluctance to talk "outside the family", a trait the Clintons value to such an extent that he has been trusted to run White House damage limitation in recurring scandals, from quashing myriad rumours of extra-marital affairs to keeping control of documents relating to the failed Whitewater land venture.

Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, and his team of investigators were yesterday attempting to discover whether Mr Lindsey could provide revealing details



Bruce Lindsey, left, the President's troubleshooter, is the latest aide to face the grand jury, writes Tom Rhodes

about Ms Lewinsky, the former White House trainee alleged to have had a sexual relationship with the President.

The Starr inquiry, in particular, is eager to discover the genesis of a mysterious "talking points" memo that Ms Lewinsky handed to Linda Tripp, the colleague who later recorded their conversations. The document suggested how Ms Tripp might shape her testimony under oath.

For Mr Lindsey, the grand jury appearance must have seemed routine. He has already been served a record

number of subpoenas in various investigations involving the Clintons. He was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Whitewater inquiry and is already facing legal bills of \$250,000 (£153,000).

A trained lawyer, Mr Lindsey is adept at answering questions while giving little away. Increasingly exhausted by the scale of his responsibilities, however, he talked for the first time to colleagues last year about leaving the White House. There was talk yesterday that he may cite executive privilege to avoid testifying.

Many believe Mr Lindsey is

finding the Lewinsky affair, the most controversial of Mr Clinton's presidency, much harder to defend as Mr Starr continues to demand testimony from an increasing number of witnesses.

Even as Mr Lindsey was inside the court, Kathleen Willey, the volunteer who reportedly has said that Mr Clinton groped her in November 1993, was subpoenaed by the inquiry.

Separately, the President's personal lawyers have asked a federal judge in Little Rock to throw out the sexual harassment suit filed by Paula Jones, the case which unwittingly resulted in the revelations surrounding Ms Lewinsky.

In a vast legal document, the lawyers argued for the first time that Mrs Jones, a former Arkansas employee who alleges Mr Clinton asked her to perform oral sex in a Little Rock hotel room, had failed over the past four years to establish a pattern of sexual impropriety. "[Mrs Jones] spent 99 per cent of her discovery efforts attempting to substantiate rumours that President Clinton made sexual advances to other women. But she failed to establish that," the document said.

"Nothing could demonstrate more clearly that this suit had very little to do with redressing her purported personal injury and everything to do with using the compulsory processes of the court in an attempt to damage and humiliate the President," it added.

Tax on crime reports urged

Atlanta: Georgia legislators are debating a proposed law which would tax newspapers and radio and television stations for stories about crime.

State Representative Charles Sims has proposed the 10 per cent tax on revenue generated by crime stories.

He also wants criminals to pay a 100 per cent tax on money they get when they sell their story. All proceeds would be given to victims but the American Civil Liberties Union said the Bill threatened free speech and a free press. (Reuters)



Hakuba course workers seize an opportunity to sleep as rain postponed events

CBS slips up on coverage of Winter Olympics

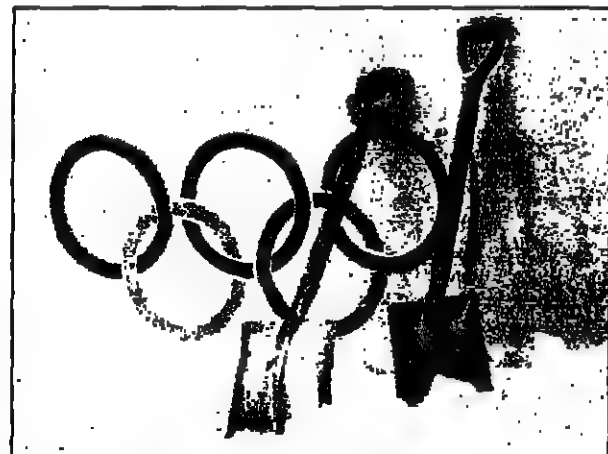
FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

AMERICAN viewers are giving the Winter Olympics in Nagano a spectacular thumbs-down, spurning inept and delayed television coverage for more up-to-date newspaper reports.

Figures released yesterday show that the Games have so far had the lowest ratings since the 1968 Olympics, hosted by France in Grenoble. With ratings of only 16.4 (each ratings point represents 980,000 "TV homes"), CBS network is ruing the day it paid \$375 million (£230 million) for broadcasting rights.

In Britain, the Olympics are being screened both by the BBC and the satellite channel Eurosport. A pleased BBC said provisional viewing figures showed 1.9 million people were watching its nightly round-up programme — at 7pm on BBC2. An average of 500,000 people see late-night events, including some live competitions, between mid-night and 3am. Highlights of the opening ceremony on BBC2 were watched by 1.8 million people.

Eurosport, providing 24-hour coverage, said its average late-night viewing figure for Britain was 27,000. Up to



Heavy snowfalls at Shiga Kogen defeated skiers

80,000 watched Tuesday's speed skating highlights. Across Europe, 65 million people tuned in for at least 15 minutes in the first week.

As the figure-skating competition heats up this week, CBS is praying that Michelle Kwan, Tara Lipinski and Nicole Bobek — three elfin American favourites — will give ratings a much-needed boost. Dismal viewing figures for the first 11 days of prime-time coverage mean advertisers have been offered large slices of free air time as compensation.

The time difference with

Japan has certainly hampered CBS's ability to bring live coverage to viewers, ensuring that exploits have already featured in newspapers or on the news. However, incensed viewers also say that it is devoting too much time to "soft" features about athletes, and not enough to hard news and coverage.

Many Americans living in northern border states, or with satellite dishes, are tuning into the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which covers all events in depth at all times.

Rob Hughes, page 42

WORLD SUMMARY

El Niño prompts food crisis

Rome: A near-record number of countries face food supply emergencies this year, mainly because of the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported.

The Rome-based agency said that the number of countries facing food emergencies has increased to 37 compared to 31 towards the end of last year. Food supply troubles stretched through Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and also included Iraq and North Korea. (Reuters)

Algeria attack leaves 23 dead

Paris: Suspected Islamic militants massacred 23 civilians overnight in the western Algerian province of Tlemcen. Security forces were quickly on the scene and claim they shot dead one of the assailants and were hunting others. Television had earlier shown the bodies of eight militants whom it claimed were operating in the Tlemcen area. Four attacks in three days have left at least 55 dead. (Reuters)

Ferry disaster case is closed

Stockholm: Sweden officially closed the book on Europe's worst peacetime shipping disaster, the sinking of the Estonia ferry, with a decision not to press charges against anyone because of lack of evidence. Relatives and friends of the 852 people who perished in the 1994 disaster are continuing to pursue a civil claim in France. (Reuters)

Terrorists are jailed

Paris: Thirty-six members of an Algerian Muslim guerrilla group were jailed for up to ten years, including the suspected ringleader reported killed by security forces in Algeria. The court sentenced Ali Touchent, tried in his absence for masterminding bombings in France in 1995, because there was no undisputed document proving he was dead. (Reuters)

Kaunda faces lesser charge

Lusaka: The former Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, was charged with concealing information about an attempted coup, a lesser charge than plotting the failed putsch for which he was arrested. The charge carries a possible sentence of life imprisonment, defence lawyers said. (AP)

Turk tried for slander

Ankara: Oral Celik, who was once implicated in the 1981 shooting of the Pope, has gone on trial for allegedly slandering Mesut Yilmaz, the Prime Minister, after he claimed during testimony that in 1984 Mr Yilmaz had asked a terrorist to arrange for his gambling debts to be wiped out. (AP)

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RESEARCH: IN THE THES, 20 FEBRUARY.

Widow 'cheated' of \$21 million jackpot

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THE owner of a corner shop is suspected of swindling a 72-year-old widow out of \$21 million after she claimed that a lottery number — which she has picked every single week for seven years — was his on the day it won the jackpot.

Paraskeve Kantges, who has demanded the prize money, says she placed a telephone order for her "usual ticket" with Nick Haven, who runs a shop in Watertown, Massachusetts. She always buys her ticket from him. Owing to heavy snow on the day, she had not been able to

walk to Mr Haven's shop and take possession of the ticket.

Yet on the day the winning number was announced, with the tenth largest jackpot in Massachusetts history, she found that Mr Haven would not give her the ticket; he said that it was his.

Mrs Kantges, 68, took her case to the State Lottery Commission. The number, 4-6-10-16-19-25, was the number she had played every week since 1991, because it represents the hour and date of her birth: 4am on the sixth day of the week (Friday) on the 16th day of the month in the year 1925. Her first name —

Paraskeve — means Friday in Greek. Joseph Malone, the chairman of the commission, was suspicious enough of Mr Haven to suspend temporarily his licence to sell tickets. The latter claimed that Mrs Kantges had rung him a few minutes after ordering her ticket to say that she had changed her mind and wanted to cancel. So, he says, he bought it himself. The widow denies this.

Yesterday, Mr Malone said: "We want the case to be treated as if it's a \$21 million bank heist. There is an awfully strong case that Mrs Kantges is the winner."

هكذا من الأصل



Mussolini: he was a notorious womaniser

Woman claims Duce as father

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A WOMAN of 69, who says she is the illegitimate daughter of Benito Mussolini, the former Italian Fascist dictator, has asked the authorities to exhume the Duce's body from the family tomb at Predappio, near Ravenna, for DNA tests, so that her claim can be proved.

Claudia Apriotti said she was the result of a "brief but intense relationship" between Mussolini and Princess Sveva Vittoria Colonna, who was 19 at the time of the alleged affair in 1929.

Signora Apriotti told Oggi magazine that she felt it was "time the truth was made known". Carlo Maccaillini, her lawyer, said he had applied to the courts for an exonhumation "so that my client's paternity can be established beyond question".

Signor Maccaillini said exonhumation could be avoided if Mussolini's legitimate descendants would agree to blood tests. They include Romano Mussolini, the dictator's only surviving son, and Alessandra Mussolini, the Duce's granddaughter, who is MP for Naples. He said the Princess, who is 88, had never publicly acknowledged that she was the mother, but he claimed that a Jesuit priest had acted as a go-between, disclosing financial help from the Princess to Signora Apriotti.

Mussolini was a notorious womaniser, to the distress of his wife, Rachele, and in 1932 acquired a long-term mistress, Clara Petacci, who was murdered with him in 1945.

Romano Mussolini, who is a noted jazz musician, dismissed the claim of Signora Apriotti as "absurd", and said he would stand in front of the tomb at Predappio to prevent the body from being exhumed.

Internet neo-Nazi suspect arrested in Britain

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

AN Anglo-French police operation has broken up a violent international neo-Nazi organisation which issued death threats against French celebrities and politicians on a British-based Internet site.

Hervé Guituso, 25, the French suspected leader of the group Charlemagne Hammer Skins, was arrested in Springfield, Essex, and is expected to be extradited to France for trial. Another eight members of the network have been arrested in the South of France and charged with making death threats, inciting racial hatred and committing crimes against humanity.

The group allegedly ran an Internet site on which it issued death threats to prominent French men and women, including Simone Veil, the former Cabinet minister, Anne Sinclair, a television presenter, Jean-François Kahn, a journalist, and Patrick Gaubert, vice-president of the French Anti-Racist League. Addresses of the alleged targets, most of whom are Jewish, were also said to have been given on the Internet site.

"Our enemies must pay," the group said on its Internet site, according to M. Gaubert, a former adviser to the French Interior Ministry, who is under police protection. Working with Scotland Yard, police in Toulon traced the London address of the Internet site, which was being accessed about 5,000 times a month. The investigation has enabled police to identify about 1,500 people sympathetic to the neo-Nazi group in countries including Britain, Greece, Canada, America and Poland.



Sinclair: "death threat" for television presenter

The French inquiry was launched in September 1996 after police in Toulon discovered neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic works hidden at a disused army site. The documents contained death threats and incitements to racial hatred and the violation of cemeteries, most notably in the magazine *Wotan* (Will of the Aryan Nation), the Charlemagne group's monthly magazine.

M. Guituso, who was working as a chef in Springfield, was arrested last week after Scotland Yard officials met Thierry Rolland, the French investigating magistrate, and Pierre Corbis, president of the Toulon court, in London last month. M. Guituso moved to England in 1995 and is believed to have been watched for several months.

Documentary evidence obtained by the French police indicates links between the Charlemagne group and a shadowy group of French Satanists, the Sacred Emerald Order. Three members of that group were sentenced to between one and three years in prison last October for exhuming and mutilating a corpse in a Toulon cemetery in 1996.

More arrests are likely to follow in the coming weeks, French police sources said yesterday. French investigators say that the Charlemagne group appears to be one of the largest and best organised neo-Nazi groups yet uncovered, with a co-ordinated international structure and logistical centres for disseminating violent racist propaganda based principally in Britain and America.

Last September the police questioned 13 people after raids in Lyons, Rouen and Marseille. Eight of those questioned, believed to be associated with the Charlemagne group, have been placed under formal investigation in prison by M. Rolland.

Searches conducted at the homes of those arrested produced much racist and neo-fascist literature. Some of those facing charges are described by police as " fervent admirers of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich".



Stills from the 1912 silent film show the captain of the Titanic and, below, the sinking of the ocean liner

First film on Titanic surfaces in Berlin

Berlin: The world's first film about the Titanic, a 30-minute silent film made in Berlin two months after the liner sank in 1912, has been discovered on the shelf of a film collector here, a German newspaper said yesterday.

The Tagesspiegel daily said one copy of *In Nacht und Eis* (In Night and Ice), which is believed to be the first of at least eight feature films on the doomed ship, had been found after a lengthy search.

Andreas Austlitz, a journalist whose earlier articles on the film by director Mime



Mitsu prompted the anonymous film collector to come forward, said: "The film is no great work of art, but it is historically significant because it was made so soon after the Titanic sank."

The latest film on the Titanic tragedy is breaking box office records around the world, taking more than \$700 million (£429 million) in its first two months. Other films on the doomed ship include the 1958 *Night to Remember* by Roy Ward Baker; a 1929 German-British co-production called *Atlantide* by E.A. Dupont; and a 1942 German film *Titanic* by director Herbert Selgin.

Herr Austlitz said the special effects of *In Nacht und Eis* are primitive. It is clear that the toy ship runs into an ice cube in a small pond. "But it is quite an achievement for 1912," he said. "He [Mitsu] shows the tensions between the wealthy and poor passengers. He shows the captain going down with the ship." (Reuters)

Belgian fiasco leads to police merger

FROM REUTERS IN BRUSSELS

BELGIUM announced sweeping changes to its police forces yesterday in the face of public outrage at their role in the country's festering child murder scandal.

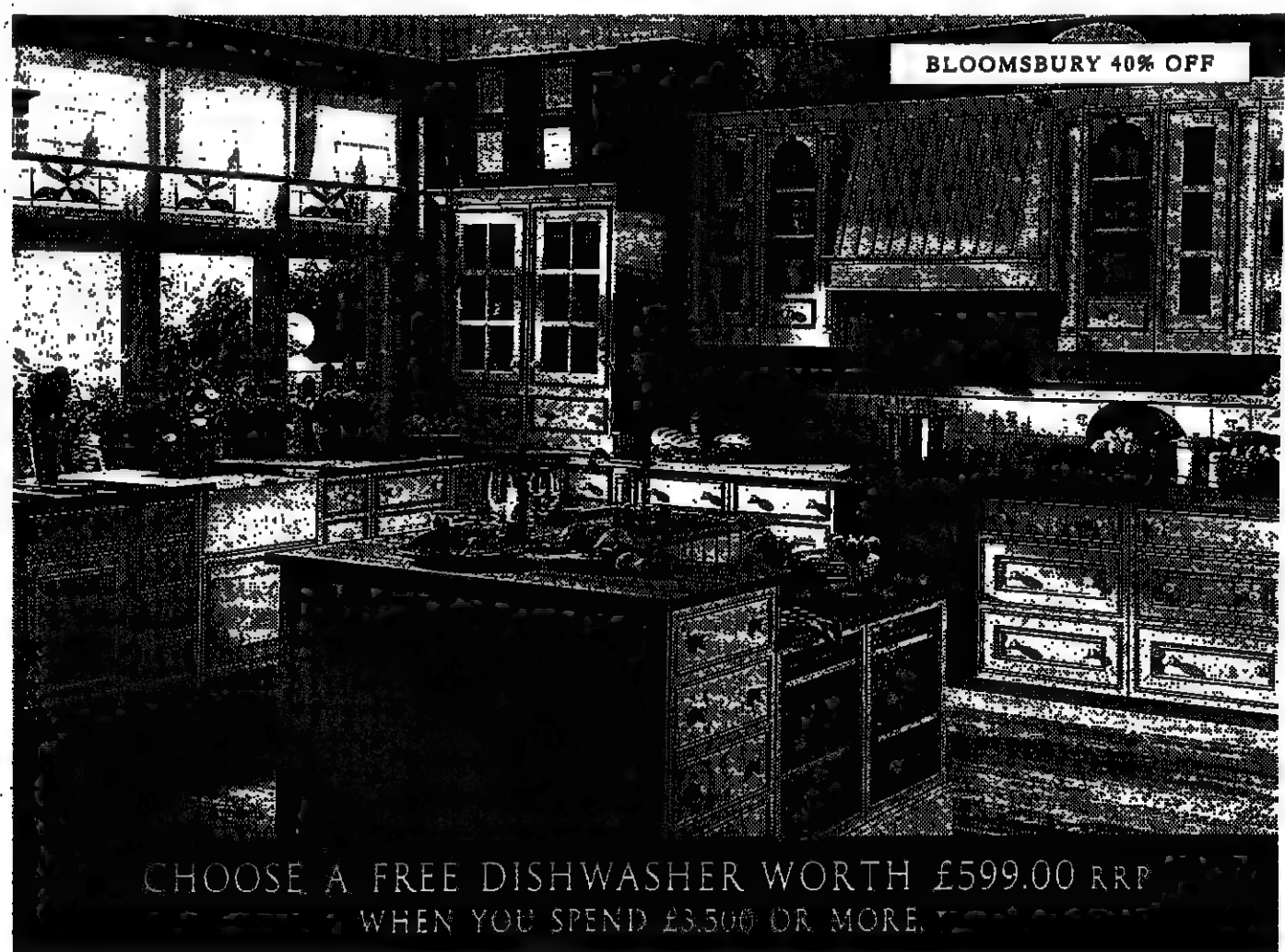
A unified national police force will be created combining paramilitary gendarmerie and the judicial police, said Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Prime Minister, after a special Cabinet meeting.

Two reports by an all-party parliamentary committee — the latest of which was published on Tuesday — attacked the police and particularly the gendarmes for errors, miscalculations and bungling in the hunt for the abductors of four girls. Their graves were found in mid-1996 on property belonging to the convicted child rapist, Marc Dutroux, who had escaped detection up to then despite his criminal record and being under surveillance while holding at least two of the girls prisoner.

The reports found that rivalries between the police forces had meant vital information was withheld and, in some cases, misleading information passed on.

The new, 18,000-strong unified national police force will come under the joint control of the Justice and Interior Ministers, have a single police chief and an overseeing committee of control. The new force, to be established before national elections in mid-1999, will act at both national and local level, and liaise closely with the 18,000-strong communal police controlled by mayors.

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Nato to extend Bosnia mandate

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A NEW Nato peacekeeping force for Bosnia to replace the 35,000 troops whose mandate ends in June was formally approved by 16 alliance ambassadors yesterday.

They decided that the force should keep to the same strength of 35,000 troops, but that will be reduced to 20,000-25,000 after Bosnian presidential and parliamentary elections in September.

The decision commits Nato to a third phase of peacekeeping. At first it had been hoped that the Nato mission could be completed in one operation. Peacekeeping troops, part of the so-called Implementation Force (Ifor), were deployed to ensure that the Bosnia-Herzegovina Peace Accord, reached at Dayton in the United States to end the war, was properly enforced.

Ifor was replaced by Sfor, the Stabilisation Force, when the former warring factions failed to fulfil all their Dayton obligations. Sfor's mission will be completed by the end of June and, although America had said it would then withdraw its troops, US soldiers will be playing the key role in the new force — to be called Dfor, standing for either Dissuasive or Disruption Force. Britain is expected to maintain its force of just over 5,500 troops.

The Nato ambassadors will see representatives of non-Nato countries that have contributed troops to Sfor tomorrow, prior to the drawing up of an operational plan.

Readers admire Clinton exploits

FROM ROBIN LODGE
IN MOSCOW

THE Russian public is opposed to military action against Iraq, but President Clinton can draw comfort that most back him over Paula Jones and Monica Lewinsky — to judge by nearly 4,000 letters to the popular daily *Komsomol*.

RUSSIA

Pravda. Under the headline "Sleep with whom you like, but don't drop bombs", the paper ran the results of a reader survey.

Of 3,752 respondents, only 54 were against the President. Most expressed amazement that such trivial pursuits could force loss of office. The replies will now be sent to the American Embassy here, and to the White House.

Bahrain base ban upsets US strategy

America cannot use its Gulf airpower fully until diplomatic hurdles have been cleared, writes Michael Evans

DESPERATE attempts are being made by the United States to persuade the Gulf state of Bahrain to allow American combat aircraft to take off from its bases in the event of a decision to launch military strikes against Iraq.

A huge array of US Air Force firepower has been assembled at the Sheikh Isa bin Salman air base in Bahrain, ready for launching attacks, but on Tuesday the Gulf state said that it would not sanction combat aircraft taking off for attacks on Iraq.

President Clinton has telephoned Sheikh Isa bin Salman al-Khalifa, the Emir of Bahrain, according to Pentagon sources, and received assurances that he would get all the help he needed from the area. However, the statement from Bahrain that it had not approved the use of its territory for airstrikes indicated that there was still urgent negotiating to be done.

The US has a whole air expeditionary force based in Bahrain, consisting of dozens of F16s, F15s, air-refuelling

tankers and three B1B strategic bombers. An air force official said that the air expeditionary force had been sent to Bahrain just before Christmas. Two more B1B bombers, bringing the total to three, were sent only recently, on the understanding that the Bahraini base could be used for offensive strikes.

Only last week, William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, said he had been assured by Bahrain and Kuwait that American and British aircraft could be launched from their bases. The RAF has three VC10 tankers in Bahrain.

A Pentagon official in Washington said: "We are doing everything we can to resolve this matter by talking to our allies in the region."

The US Fifth Fleet has its headquarters in the port of

Manama, which has boosted the economy of the Gulf state, and it is expected that much pressure will be applied to the Government to recognise the importance of supporting Washington.

American officials hope that Bahrain will change its mind once all the diplomatic efforts have been exhausted. That, it is assumed, would come after any announcement by Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, that his peace mission to Baghdad had failed.

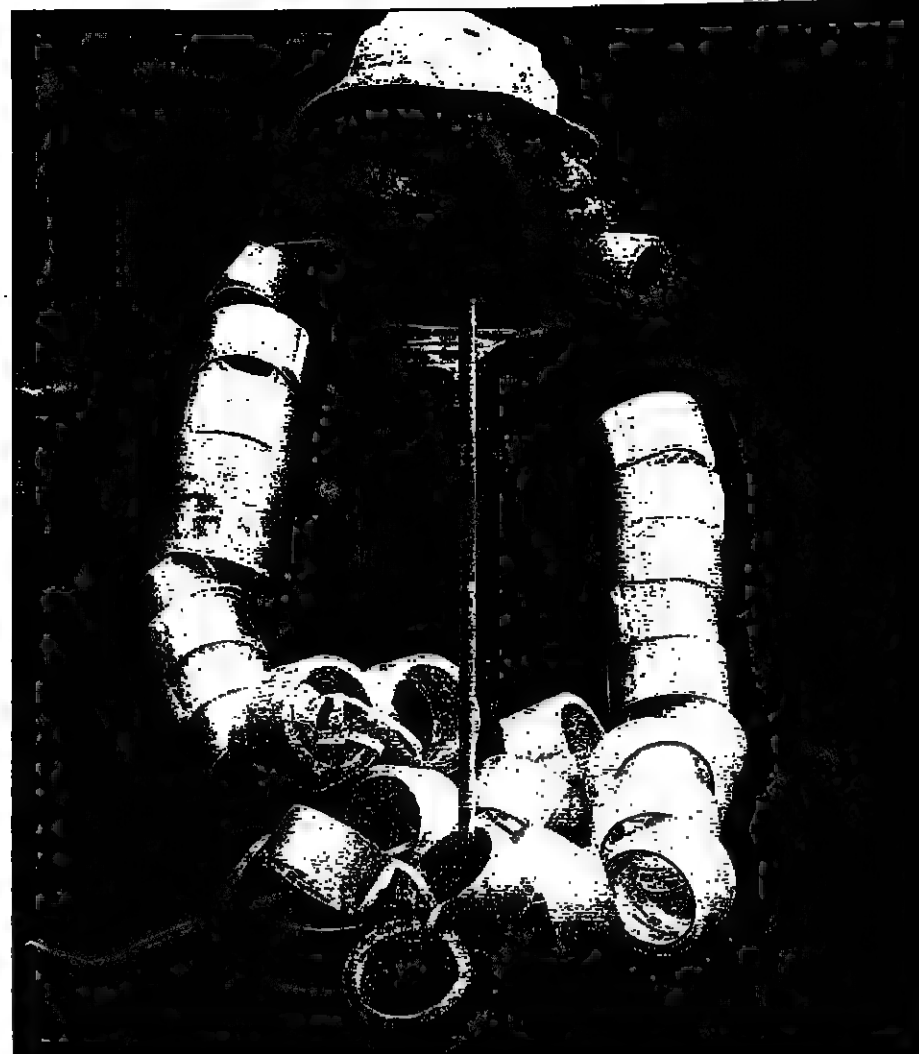
However, for the present there remain some unresolved key issues that could affect the timing of any US-led airstrikes.

Saudi Arabia is still adamant that it will not approve the launching of offensive operations from its bases,

although negotiations are continuing with the Saudi Government. Some American military officials hope that even the Saudis may change their mind if President Saddam Hussein of Iraq refuses to co-operate over the latest peace offer.

Another important outstanding issue is the choice of headquarters in the region for General Anthony Zinni, the US Marine Corps officer who is Commander-in-Chief of US Central Command and the man who will be in charge of the multinational military operation. General Zinni has various options, including Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, but until he has received his executive orders from President Clinton and the diplomatic difficulties have been resolved in the two countries, he has had no alternative but to await events.

General Zinni went to the Gulf last week to examine possible locations for his headquarters and then flew to Washington to discuss his views with the Pentagon.



An Israeli in Jerusalem sells tape used for sealing rooms against chemical attack

Generals and rabbis prepare nation for war

Leading Israeli rabbis took to the skies yesterday to say prayers to ward off any Iraqi Scud missile attacks while, on the ground, the security forces introduced a plan codenamed Operation Snake-skin to counter any attack.

Under the plan, the Home Front Command and the Health Ministry conducted their first exercise designed to deal with any attack using biological or chemical weapons. In such an event, soldiers in protective kit will hand out antibiotics door to door.

Amid continued scenes of national hysteria about the possibility of a germ attack by President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Israel radio reported that a planeload of rabbis led by the venerable Rabbi Yitzhak Kaddouri had made the prayer flight in an attempt to try to ward off any Iraqi missile attacks.

Many ordinary Israelis, well versed in the coded language used by their leaders when referring to Israel's unadmitted nuclear arsenal — including weapons understood to have been readied for use in the event of any Iraqi chemical or biological strike — were more comforted by the words of Major-General Eitan Ben-Eliyahu, the air force's commander.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the crisis developed, the general assured Israelis that the air force was taking necessary precautions and that it was ready to deal with any threat. "If events develop, the air force, in its current state of routine preparedness, together with a little homework and preparations we are doing now, knows how to give an appropriate response if needed," he said.

His remarks were interpreted by Western security experts as indicating that Israeli warplanes and Jericho 3 missiles are poised to attack Iraqi targets in the event of even a single germ-tipped missile being fired. The experts believe that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, has given orders for instant non-nuclear reaction should a conventional Iraqi missile hit Israel. Diplomatic sources

Israelis prepare to meet the Iraqi threat of Scud missile attacks. Christopher Walker reports from Jerusalem

said that most of the Cabinet were unlikely to heed appeals from Washington or London that any nuclear reaction to an Iraqi chemical or biological strike on Israel should be left to the allied forces. The Israeli plan is for at least one tactical nuclear warhead or neutron bomb to be used.

As part of Operation Snake-skin, details were published of how to prepare the sealed rooms ordered in every house or flat once news is received that an Iraqi attack may be imminent. Shops have witnessed brawling as tens of thousands of anxious citizens queued for scarce plastic sheeting after remarks by Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister.

Public nerves were shaken further yesterday when the newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* reported that most of the sheeting being bought "does not keep out poison gas". The *Jerusalem Post* told readers: "The room should be an internal one, with as few as possible outside walls and windows, and preferably adjacent to the bathroom so that it too can be sealed."

Prepare "plastic sheets, preferably multi-layered, tape, floor rugs (for the crack between the door and the floor), long-sleeved waterproof clothes for each family member, food and at least one litre of water per person, stored in sealed plastic bottles".

The paper added: "If and when instructions are issued to seal the room, close the blinds and windows of the room you have chosen, stick wide tape around every window and door frame, except the room's entrance door. Make sure you tape over all keyholes."

ugh!

SAME OLD SCHLEP
OUT TO THE
AIRPORT.

I hate having to do this
just to get there early.
Looks like the plane's
going to be HEAVING...

I should get checked in quick.

see if I can get a

window seat

Don't want to have to
keep up for someone
to get past.

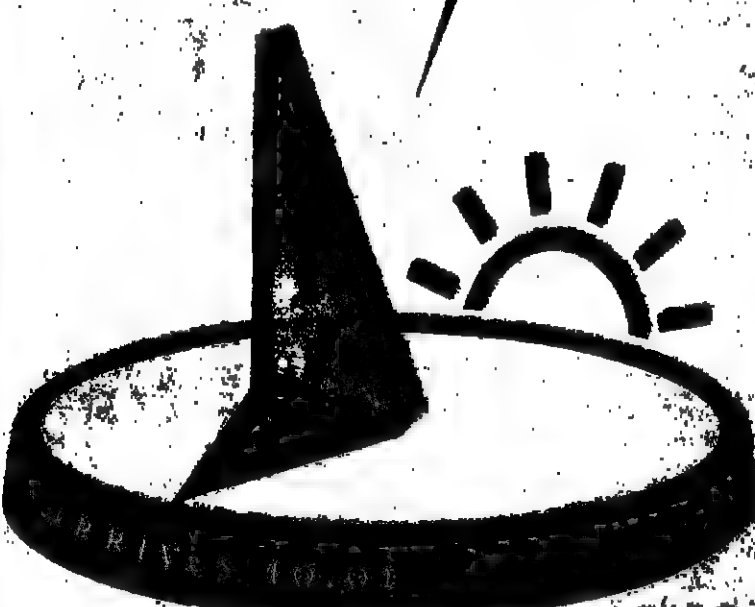
I could
murder
a coffee though.

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FILES HE'S CARRYING. HE'S
SWEATING ALREADY.

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all too much

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هكذا من الأصل

THE TIMES THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19 1998

Babies sacrificed to one man's ego

ZAINEB ALI is what generals call "collateral damage". A victim of malnutrition and infection, she cannot be treated for lack of drugs. She will be dead in a few days, sacrificed on the altar of one man's ego and foreign powers' desire to contain it.

She will join thousands of other children who have died as a direct result of President Saddam Hussein's failure to comply with the terms of the 1991 Gulf War ceasefire, and his willingness to allow 17 million Iraqis to suffer the cost of his intransigence.

The sanctions, which were imposed seven years ago to force him into compliance with UN resolutions calling on him to destroy his weapons of mass destruction, restrict the export of all commodities, including food and medicine, to the rogue regime.

Saddam's smiling portraits and the statues of him in uniform striking heroic poses adorn almost every street corner in Baghdad. He has even been good enough to bestow his name on the paediatric hospital where Zaineb lies dying.

But, as he has refused to comply with the UN resolutions, his name is almost the only thing he can give the 400 toddlers in the hospital named after him.

Zaineb, at 18 months, is suffering from gastroenteritis and septicæmia from an abscess in her cheek, as well as malnutrition. The daughter of a Bedouin family, she lies in a ward filled with children who have little chance of surviving diseases which are fatal only because doctors do not have the basic drugs to treat them.

"There is no reason why this child, and many others like her, should be a few days from death. Her condition could be easily treated with drugs and antibiotics," said Dr. Khalid Saleh. But the Saddam Hussein Children's Hos-



One in three Iraqi children is chronically malnourished as Saddam stockpiles weapons of destruction, writes Sam Kiley in Baghdad

pital ran out of all drugs, other than those containing saline solution, three days ago. The supply of antibiotics dried up yesterday.

"We don't have glucose solutions, we don't have any nutritional drugs. Without these it is almost impossible to treat children dying from malnutrition," said the hospital's senior consultant, Dr. Yasser Kaouf. Pointing at a baby gasping inside an incubator, he said:

"The gasping tiny baby in the incubator was a lucky one. Some premature babies go home to die"

"That's one of the lucky ones. Some premature babies are treated in the hospital. But we only have six incubators. Some go home to die."

Omar Jamal is ten months old and suffers from a congenital heart condition that will kill him unless he gets treatment in the West. His father, Mafumad, held him gingerly.

"Drugs are not a problem for us. But we need to get Omar to an expert surgeon or he will die. I see my baby dying. I see other babies dying. This cannot be right," he said. Shadar, his wife, wept. "Can you help my baby?" she asked.

According to the World Health Organisation, one in three Iraqi children under five — 960,000 babies and toddlers — is "chronically malnourished".

According to the UN, Iraq imports about \$210 million (£130 million) worth of healthcare products every six months under the UN's "oil for food" deal. All other imports, the UN insists, are illegal and UN officials said yesterday that they were satisfied that the Iraqi regime has distributed food and medicines fairly.

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, who is expected to arrive in Baghdad tomorrow in a last-ditch attempt to persuade Saddam to agree to unfettered access to all suspected weapons sites, has recommended that the UN raise the whole "food for oil" allowance from \$2 billion to \$5.2 billion — which would give the health sector \$3.4 billion.

A vote to approve the increase in the "oil for food" scheme could come as early as tomorrow night. Security Council diplomats insist that there is no linkage between the humanitarian package and the confrontation over arms inspections.

US and British military planners have insisted that they will select targets that cause the minimum amount of "collateral damage". But as the Saddam Hussein Children's Hospital demonstrates, sanctions imposed by civilians are already taking innocent lives — and show no signs of affecting the Iraqi President's grip on power.



A mother holds her sick baby in a Baghdad hospital. Many have little chance of survival

Britain says new resolution required

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN yesterday insisted that a new resolution in the United Nations Security Council was needed, whether Kofi Annan's mission to Iraq succeeded or not.

The Foreign Office said that if the UN Secretary-General won Baghdad's agreement to allow UN weapons inspectors free access to the sites they wished to visit, the resolution would codify Iraq's agreement and obligations. If Mr Annan failed, it would express world dismay, and international condemnation of Iraq.

The Foreign Office insisted, however, that no new resolution was needed to give legal authority to any military action. "It would be

UNITED NATIONS

better, from a political and legal point of view," the spokesman said.

But Britain believed any action was already authorised by the Security Council resolution 687, passed at the end of the Gulf War, which established the ceasefire and spelt out the UN demand that Iraq agree to the inspection and dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction.

Britain says that Iraq's refusal to allow inspectors free access constituted a breach of that resolution. The ceasefire, therefore, no longer applied and the UN fell back to resolution 678 — which authorised force to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

Britain has found general agreement with its view that Mr Annan's mission was the make-or-break move. Nothing further could be put to Iraq and, if diplomacy failed this week, a military strike could be expected shortly afterwards.

Annun proposes role for 'dignity police' as fresh gloss is put on old offer

By JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK AND SAM KILEY

DIPLOMACY

THE final offer being carried to Baghdad by Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, in an effort to avert war is virtually identical to one that Iraq rejected last month when proposed by the chief UN weapons inspector.

The compromise offers "white-glove" inspections of the living quarters of the eight "presidential sites" placed off-limits by Iraq,

with Baghdad-based diplomats chosen by the UN chief accompanying weapons inspectors in order to guarantee the "dignity and sovereignty of Iraq".

Diplomats say that Richard Butler, the chairman of the UN Special Commission (Unscom) responsible for ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, has privately dubbed the proposed

diplomatic escort "the dignity police". Except for a few minor details, Mr Butler made the same offer to Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, during his talks in Baghdad last month. One Unscom source said there was virtually no difference between Mr Butler's offer and Mr Annan's proposal.

According to Mr Butler's written report to the Security Council on his return, dated January 22: "The executive chairman said progress might be made if it were possible

to differentiate the presidential residences from the buildings and areas around them but within the defined presidential and sovereign sites."

"If Iraq were to accept the commission's right to inspect these sites, the commission might be able to apply particular procedures for the inspection of the buildings where the President lives and works, while preserving the inspection's objectives and effectiveness."

When Mr Butler made the offer, however, Mr Aziz simply repeated his demand for a three-month moratorium on UN inspections of "presidential sites" and said he would reconsider his position only when access to such sites was the sole outstanding issue before UN sanctions could be lifted.

Mr Annan, whose mission yesterday received the full backing of the 15-nation Security Council, is hoping the package will now be acceptable to Iraq because of the

weight of international opinion and the threat of imminent military action.

"Obviously, this is not going to be an easy mission," Mr Annan said after meeting the full Security Council. "It's a difficult mission, coming at a critical juncture." The Iraqi Government, he said, has "indicated they are serious".

The UN yesterday announced it would evacuate 30 staff from Baghdad on the eve of the Secretary-General's visit.

Described by Eric Falt, spokesman for the UN in Baghdad as a "precautionary staff protection measure", the evacuation unnerved some local people.

"If the UN are running away, what hope is there that the Americans will not bomb us now. They have told the UN to get out and that tells us they are going to start bombing soon," said Ahmed Rafidi, a roadside kebab-vendor. However, the evacuation will still leave 240 UN staff in the capital.

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Style kicks off London Fashion Week, this Sunday

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

An easy cure for fibroids

Between 20,000 and 30,000 women in the United Kingdom every year have a hysterectomy to reduce their monthly loss of blood as a result of fibroids, the benign muscular tumours that grow in the wall of the uterus. *Pulse*, a magazine for GPs, reports that Dr Woodruff Walker, a radiologist at the Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford, has imported Professor Ravina's Parisian non-surgical treatment for the condition which, in many cases, removes the need for an operation.

The procedure doesn't involve admission to hospital, whereas those who have a hysterectomy may be in-patients for between five and ten days. Surgery is also more likely to have serious complications. Only 4 per cent of the patients who had Dr Walker's non-surgical treatment needed a hysterectomy later.

Professor Ravina's principle involves passing a catheter under X-ray control into the uterine artery then injecting into it a substance, polyvinyl alcohol, that centres on an enriched blood supply around the tumour. The chemical causes obstruction of the little vessels leading to the fibroid which then, in an appreciable proportion of cases, shrinks over the next few days. Smaller fibroids disappear altogether, the larger ones lose about half their bulk.

By the age of forty, 40 per cent of women have fibroids but although they are so common, there is little awareness of them. In most cases the fibroids do not cause symptoms and after the menopause they tend to atrophy and



Dr Thomas Stuttford reports on fibroids, breast cancer, anthrax, indigestion, and the dangers of toys in food products

sometimes even calcify harmlessly.

Fibroids can start to grow at any time during a woman's reproductive life, on average one in five of the women attending gynaecological and antenatal classes during these years have fibroids. There are interesting racial differences in the incidence of fibroids: Afro-Caribbean women for instance not only start having fibroids earlier, but are nine times more likely to develop them than their Caucasian neighbours.

The fibroid tumours are composed of a mixture of smooth muscle and modified connective tissue, they grow either in the bulk of the uterine muscle, on the outside of the uterus or from beneath the lining of the uterine cavity, submucous fibroids, or from its inner surface. Fibroids can also form on the cervix of the

By the age of forty, 40 per cent of women have fibroids

uterus and on other occasions a submucous fibroid from inside the uterine cavity can project through the opening of the cervix.

Fibroids are associated with infertility, this may be as a result of the distortion of the uterine cavity and interference with the implantation of the embryo as well as causing changes to normal uterine motility. Another possibility is that the hormonal balance which favours the development of fibroids may make conception more difficult.

Fibroids are a common cause of menorrhagia, heavy periods. Shaw, Souter and Stanton's standard textbook, *Gynaecology*, quotes figures which suggest that between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of women with fibroids suffer from excess bleeding and that it is the cause of the menorrhagia in 10 per cent of all those women who have moderately heavy

periods, and in 40 per cent of those whose periods are excessive. The fibroids vary in size from that of a pea to larger than a full-term pregnancy. Blood loss induced by fibroids is a common cause of anaemia, breathlessness and loss of energy in women.

These tumours are commonly treated either by surgery, myomectomy, designed to remove each individual growth, or by hysterectomy. Myomectomy would be the obvious choice for a young woman who has only one or two fibroids and is hoping to have more babies. However, hysterectomy is favoured by doctors for the older woman whose family is complete.

Neither operation is without its complications. The number of fibroids may be enormous, in one case recorded in *Gynaecology* the painstaking surgeon removed 125. Each individual tumour has to be enucleated, shelled out, and there may be bleeding into the cavity which has been left behind. It may also be awkward to remove those from inside the cavity, the ones growing on the outside of the uterus are usually excised for fear that during pregnancy when they initially grow bigger they may twist and cause an abdominal emergency at a tricky time.

Saving the uterus has an appeal for many women beyond that of retaining reproductive capacity. Hysterectomy, too, may affect the efficiency of the pelvic floor. Hormone treatment before surgery can be used to shrink the fibroids so that complications become less likely.



Afro-Caribbean women are nine times more likely to develop fibroids than their Caucasian neighbours

THE recent letter on breast examinations from the Department of Health to all doctors has caused them, their patients and organisations such as the Breast Care campaign considerable confusion.

Nothing in the Chief Medical Officer's letter, it is assumed, was intended to suggest that women are not well served by being familiar with the feel of their breasts — so that any changes will be immediately noticed and reported. Breast awareness is an important diagnostic tool.

However, a false sense of security may be induced if women slavishly follow the

Why you should test your breasts

advice to examine their breasts formally in the bath at the same time each month. Women should regularly feel their breasts to learn what they are like at different times. They should look for changes in size and shape, and in the shape or position of the nipple. They should note any lumps, discharge or bleeding around the nipple as well as unusual lumps, thickening of

the tissue, puckering of the skin and discomfort.

Nor was it intended that women with anything suspicious in their breasts should wait until their next mammography is due before going to their doctor.

Few, however, would disagree with the Chief Medical Officer that manual examination of the breast as a formal screening procedure without the support of mammography is useful.

What women need is the mammography service to include older women, the under-50s and more frequent screenings for those at risk.

The spores of war

THANKS to Saddam Hussein, the study of anthrax is now more likely to be of interest to students at the Staff College than to occupational health physicians.

In my youth, anthrax was still occasionally known as Woolsorter's disease. It was usually caught from skins, hides and fleeces imported from such places as Russia, Asia Minor, Iraq and the Far East, where it is endemic among such animals as horses, pigs, camels, sheep and goats.

Foreign goatskin was particularly notorious as a source of infection and special arrangements were made for its importation. Anthrax did not appear in Britain until 1847, and its arrival was related to the introduction of imported mohair and alpaca.

The late Dr Donald Hunter, in his book *The Diseases of Occupation*, records that at his hospital, the Royal London, 120 cases of anthrax were treated between 1884 and 1954. Some 85 per cent of these cases involved people who handled skins, fleeces, bonemeal and animal fertiliser. In the past it was not only common among dockers, but also among those who sorted the fleeces in the warehouses or who wove the wool.

In Bradford in the last century, anthrax represented a considerable problem, although this was eased after efficient ventilation was introduced to extract the dust. Goatskins were particularly dangerous and special arrangements were made for their fumigation.

Since then, improved public health regulations have made it an increasingly uncommon disease — but even so, as late as 1927, two elephants at London Zoo died from anthrax, and four out of six zookeepers looking after them caught the disease.

Even after the Second World War, ivory workers occasionally contracted the disease, and one famous British piano keyboard-maker caught it in the late 1940s from an elephant tusk he was cutting with a circular saw.

Once the bacillus in the blood of the infected animal has come into contact with air, it forms spores. In this form, the infection can remain a

latent threat for many years. Conversely, it may find entry into the human body through a cut or sore on a worker's hand.

There are three types of anthrax: the cutaneous form, in which an unpleasant black ulcer (indeed, the word anthrax derives from the Greek for coal or carbuncle) develops. Those who suffer from this type usually recover. Gastro-intestinal anthrax, in which contaminated meat is eaten, is highly dangerous as the gut wall is invaded and then ulcerates into the tissues.

But it is the third form, pulmonary anthrax, that interests the Iraqi leader. In the Western world, modern ventilation made this condition a disease of the past. However, leaders during the Second World War realised its potential as a weapon — a potential that the Iraqis may now exploit. Saddam Hussein hopes to deluge his enemies with the spores, which would then be inhaled. (The spores can also linger in the ground for decades.)

Although there is no external lesion, the infection soon becomes blood-borne. Initially, a soldier would suffer from no more serious symptoms than those of severe flu — headache, fever, extreme lassitude, aching limbs and dizziness. Soon, however, the spores multiply, the lung tissue and the root of the organ, together with the associated glands, are infiltrated, bleed and break down. The mortality rate is very high and victims die comparatively quickly (usually within three days), although not so quickly that it would not cause chaos in military hospitals.

In about one in five cases, however, death is very sudden. Chest pain and breathlessness followed by collapse may be the first sign of infection.

Prevention is the best approach to anthrax, and vaccines are now available. If it is contracted, penicillin will clear it, but unless it is confined to the skin, the drug must be administered intravenously, early and in high doses. Even with antibiotics, however, the mortality rate is still high, and the shock and respiratory failure that accompanies infection must also be attended to.



Goatskin: source of anthrax

Beware toys included with food products

THIS death of three-year-old Roddy Breslin, of Omagh, in Northern Ireland, after he'd choked on part of a plastic toy lorry, including some chocolate egg, has resulted in better control of these advertising gimmicks. It must be made plain that warnings on wrappers are applicable to children under five rather than three.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is hopeful that there will be

European legislation, which will stop the practice of including toys with food products.

Meanwhile, parents have been warned that these toys can kill. When I was a casualty officer, two children were admitted almost at the same time after inhaling the heads of plastic guardsmen. One child died. In Roddy Breslin's case, a post mortem recovered parts of a plastic car from one of his airways.

There are known to have been three recent deaths in the UK. In Greece, the Athens Medical School found 2,000 cases in which treatment had been necessary as the result of these novelties.

Fast relief for indigestion

THIS month Janssen Cilag, the company which markets the anti-indigestion tablet Prepidol, has introduced a new form of the tablet, Prepidol Quicklet, which dissolves within seconds on the tongue and is absorbed even more quickly.

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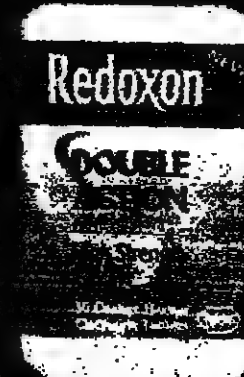
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'I'm doing this for the money'

Top model Honor Fraser may be an aristocrat, but her family is broke. Interview by Grace Bradberry

Fashion forges some strange alliances, and few appear stranger than that between the aristocratic model Honor Fraser and the East End designer Alexander McQueen. This thoroughly odd couple jointly presented one of the Brit awards last week: the not-and the yob, you might say.

Except that Honor Fraser would not say that at all. Thanks to McQueen, she is now the face of Couture Givenchy, which he designs. The prestigious and lucrative contract has enhanced her status in the fashion world no end. As a result she is now banned from McQueen's own label shows, but next Wednesday she will sit in the front row for his London Fashion Week extravaganza — a rare honour for a model.

Despite the startling contrast between his glacial steps and her soft, refined timbre, his background as a cabdriver's son, hers as a member of the Lovat Fraser clan, she insists they are soulmates. "We're both very family minded, and we're both from Scotland," she says without blinking. The infamous Highland Rape collection was scarcely a homage to the homeland but it seems best to let this pass. "I really see in him someone who is a very sensitive and a very delicate person..." She pauses, looks momentarily flustered — "I don't know if delicate is the right word," — then smiles, and opts for "sweet" instead.

"You have to hand it to Honor Fraser — the girl is smart. We meet in a dingy cafe on the King's Road that was one of her teenage haunts. She is wearing a pair of rather intellectual wire-rimmed glasses — not at all the voguish square black variety currently worn by the fashion peck — a Lainey Keigh wool scarf and a smart trouser suit. "One of Alexander's," she says in her precise little voice. Almost her first words to me are "I'm so glad to meet you, I always read your articles." She even manages to look sincere as she flatters. Whether good breeding, or a talent, this must go down a treat in the fashion industry, where one well-applied compliment is worth a dozen pretty frocks.

It has taken a lot more than good manners — or good looks for that matter — to propel Honor into the upper echelons of fashion. In the beginning, her social pedigree certainly helped. It was her cousin, the stylist Isabella Blow, who first suggested she try modelling at 18. Encouraged by the success of another cousin, Stella Tennant, she moved to Paris and took classes at the Sorbonne while waiting for the big break. Though her first fashion shoot was for French *Marie Claire*, she found herself pigeonholed as the posh girl in tartan. "I had no idea what was going on and hadn't

'Industry gossip said Honor was as difficult as they come'

thought about how much I'd have to give to it," she says.

After four years doing the rounds she wised up. First came the haircut, a ridiculous but edgy crop by Sam McKnight. She soon became the new face of Nina Ricci and Ungaro. Richard Avedon and Steven Meisel shot her, and she appeared in American *Vogue*. Campaigns followed for *Hermès*, *Kenzo* and *Lacoste*, and there was much talk of the new trend for blue-blood models — not only herself and Stella, but also Jodie Kidd and Iris Palmer.

Of all these young women, Honor may yet turn out to have the most staying power. As the cult for jolie laide girls has slowed, so has Iris's career. Jodie has been dogged by adverse comments on her weight (too thin). And now Stella Tennant, the most successful of all, has announced her retirement. She is rumoured to be pregnant, but friends say she had tired of the whole fashion scene, finding it trivial and bitchy.

Honor is clearly a little surprised by this. "I always think Stella is so clever about keeping her distance," she

says. "I mean, everyone wishes they could value everything about their lives, but it's easy to make yourself disinterested when it all gets too much... although I'm not really disinterested. Actually, I find it all quite funny."

The endless scrutiny can get some girls down, but not Honor, who has an instinctive exhibitionism and a strong desire to make her fortune. Stella Tennant's family remains flush — her grandmother is the Duchess of Devonshire — but the Lovat fortune is virtually all gone, even the family seat in Inverness has been sold.

So if she adores modelling, it is just as well. "I really enjoy it, really, really enjoy it," she says, quite breathlessly. "But maybe the reason I'm so keen to be around is to have the money." She is known for her thriftiness, and has not bought so much as a studio flat, preferring to stay with her sister or friends when she is in London.

"I don't have many over-headers, that's the secret. Everyone always asks me if I'm really stingy. I say 'No, no, I'm really generous. I give my family presents.' I'm not stingy, but I do see people spending a lot of money on clothes. People go to Milan and the whole of Prada is cleared out within three minutes — and it's mainly models who are buying."

Does her family's relative impoverishment lie at the root both of this restraint and her desire to succeed? "I found this business completely by accident," she says carefully. "It's rare, especially at this age, to be able to make so much money."

Once Honor realised what she was "in," she quickly transformed herself from upper-crust to street, persuading the photographer Sean Ellis to shoot her for *The Face*. She also changed agency, from Storm to Select, known for having unusual, edgy girls on its books. At the time, industry gossip said Honor was as difficult as they come. "I'm very hands-on," she concedes. "I'm quite relaxed on shoots, not particularly demanding, but with my agency... I like to know what's going on." She



"I found this business completely by accident. It's rare, especially at this age, to be able to make so much money"

talks vaguely of loving fax machines and telephones. One imagines her agent must dread the sound of the phone.

All credit to her for attempting to buck a system in which models have no say in anything. "I'm totally at the mercy of the fashion world. But once they have given you a chance to establish yourself, you can use that. I'm riding on an image that has been created for me, but who knows, I might be an amazing writer, or whatever."

What limited control she does have she now uses. Her distinctive carwalk strut — "Do the horse," McQueen used to say — has been modified so she no longer resembles a dressage pony. She looks a bit embarrassed when I mention it. "I'd really got so into it," she says. "Then I saw myself doing it on video and thought 'Oh my God.' All these really beautiful girls were coming out, very composed, and then I'd come out, bringing my knees up to my chin. I'm glad it happened though — it was a trademark."

But if "the horse" ever attracted any backstage bitching, this would have been nothing compared to the knocks she suffered in 1994. First her uncle was gored to death in a hunting accident in Tanzania. Ten days later, her father died of a heart attack while out riding. Exactly a year later, her grandfather died. Her younger brother Simon became the 18th Lord Lovat but inherited a £7 million debt, forcing him to sell the castle.

"I took a month or so out of work. All my extended family were there that was really important. We all feel the support of each other, even though we might not have seen one another for a long while. I found it very strong — that's the point of the clan system."

There was a far happier occasion last summer when 60,000 Frasers gathered in the Scottish highlands. Honor was there to see her brother make a speech.

Though she may have jettisoned tweed from her modelling work, she still wears it for fun, particularly a miniskirt made for her by Vivienne Westwood. "I wrote and said that my buttocks were really cold because it was so short." But despite the jokes and the new, hard-edged image, Honor Fraser remains a very proper sort of girl.

Mum, what's mooching?

Jill Parkin longs to introduce her children to simple pastimes

WHENEVER it is that frogs start spawning, our family will be ready for them. There will be time, too, for other traditional children's pastimes, such as mooching. I am making a stand against infant overload — a malaise clearly visible in my children's friends.

After a heavy day of numbers and letters, they wait by the primary school doors to be claimed by their parents. They have had enough, but what do they get? More and more. They are whisked off to Le Club Français, to chess club, pottery or music with hardly time for a cuddle, let alone a grumble about mixed veg for lunch. One six-year-old does Japanese maths once a week, as well as swimming and tap-dancing.

Infant overload starts early. Toddlers are no longer allowed to toddle. Toddling is seen as aimless time-wasting. They should be in nursery school, tumble-totting or learning to swim from birth.

Encouraged by the television ad that showed a happy babe swimming underwater, I tried the duckling classes at the local pool. First and second-born yelled the house down. Five years on, we have just enrolled our eldest for swimming lessons (at Puffin level, she being too old at five to be a duckling). I am determined this will not end in Japanese maths.

It is at the school gates that the pressure steps up. By reception class, the French club leaflets are trickling in. "I wish," said one of my daughter's teachers tartly, "that someone would start an English club."

Of course, part of me is thinking "what fun. There was nothing like this when we were children". Is that why we are bringing up superchild, who has to do it all as well as have it all? Brought up with Brownies or riding or ballet and probably no mother's car, perhaps we are getting our children to do it for us now. Or perhaps it is just a status symbol. "Thursday? Must rush. It's Tara's tai chi. Talk about a taxi service. Bye-ee."

SO WHAT did you do in your childhood, mummy? Well, out-of-school life was an unstructured mooch to be filled with books, friends and eating apples in the garden with my sister.

On the mooch I learnt lifelong accomplishments: swimming, staring into space, knitting, baking and reaching my forehead with my big toe. Later I learnt other things which are a closed book to today's youth, such as how to catch a bus.

And yes, in those days we roamed about the countryside, somehow without being molested or knocked down. We must have been bored sometimes but at least we never suffered from stress.

Most unnatural of all, superchild doesn't even see enough of her parents to want to escape them. Parent-child contact is dwindling and she doesn't know the bliss of going to her bedroom and feeling the solitude.

Get your superchild's personal organiser out. Somewhere in March. Mooching and collecting frog-spawn. Squeeze it in.

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The right choice

Men who are ruined without rule

Lawrence Freedman explains why Saddam needs power at any cost

The official line is that military strikes will weaken President Saddam Hussein but not topple him, just as they will reduce but not eliminate his chemical and biological weapons capability. No one is promising that the next bout with Iraq will be decisive.

Military action that fails to resolve an issue once and for all appears more questionable than action that produces a clear-cut result. For the critics of the American and British Governments, the fact that the combination of actual and threatened force during this decade has forced Iraq out of Kuwait, deterred it from further adventures, and made substantial inroads into Baghdad's capacity for mass destruction counts for little when the country is still under Saddam's tight control.

The Iraqi leader has built up as a modern Hitler during the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War and so his very survival, let alone his continuing misdeeds, exasperates the allies. The cat-and-mouse games they have been obliged to play with Saddam have been dispiriting. Even if he retreats now we can be sure he will be back, relying on the weariness of the international community and divisions among his opponents. He is sustained by the idea that one day he will find the West can no longer be bothered to gear up its military and diplomatic machine.

If he had been toppled in 1991 we would have been spared this wrenching saga, but President Bush could not have set this as a war aim and held together the loose coalition ready to expel Iraq from Kuwait. He was wary of a hard fight on the road to Baghdad. As serious was the problem of what to do with a leaderless Iraq, many feared the country's disintegration and yet more regional instability.

The allies did not try to remove Saddam from power because they did not think that they needed to. It was possible that he would have become a casualty of Desert Storm himself and then, as John Major put it, few tears would have been shed. Deep down they simply could not believe that a political leader could lose a war, the "mother of all battles", in such a humiliating fashion and still survive.

That might have been a fair assumption anywhere other than in the Middle East. The Argentine junta was a casualty of the 1982 Falklands war. The Greek colonels were deposed in 1974 after they failed to intervene in Cyprus. Eden resigned after the 1956 Suez debacle and Johnson did not stand again for the US presidency in 1968 because of Vietnam.

But the Middle East is different. In 1967 Nasser offered his resignation after the catastrophic Six Day War with Israel, but the masses demanded that he stay. Perhaps because the region seems so volatile, Arab leaders have become past masters at survival. Since the surge of radical Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s the remaining dy-

nasties in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and the emirates, have kept a firm grip on power. Meanwhile, the radical leaders from that period are also still around: Assad of Syria, Qaddafi of Libya, Arafat of the PLO. Saddam is also a product of that time. Even when he was Vice-President of Iraq during the 1970s he was the regime's acknowledged "strong man".

In none of these countries is there a tradition of change through elections. The method is either a peaceful or a violent death. Thus, after Nasser died in 1969 the only change in Egypt resulted from Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1981. The only other possible outcomes seem to be imprisonment or exile. Saddam therefore anticipates no dignified retirement, no chance to spend more time with those members of his family he has not murdered, no equivalent of a seat in the House of Lords and opportunities to dispense anecdotes to TV interviewers.

Personal survival requires clinging to power. This means trusting nobody, eliminating conspirators before they have even begun to conspire, being secular one day and religious the next, knowing how to retreat and embrace old enemies as much as how to discard old friends and take the offensive, and claiming every setback as a victory. Saddam plays on the divisions among his opponents, as he has done successfully with the Kurds, and offers tributes to wishful thinkers who want to believe he has now been banished. The sanctions imposed upon the West are blamed for the miserable conditions of his people, even though he failed to take opportunities offered to bring in food and medicines and still diverts resources to his more grandiose projects.

A deposed Arab leader faces exile, prison or death

What does this mean for allied strategy? First, even if the international community could endorse a strategy of trying to remove Saddam, it is not credible to promise a change in the Iraqi Government, given past underestimates of his durability. Secondly, this does not invalidate attempts to target the foundations of his power. Precisely because Saddam thinks so hard about his own security, he will be acutely sensitive to anything that might reduce it. Thirdly, military action is not the only form of threat. Serious support might be offered to the rather fragile Iraqi opposition. Easing economic sanctions, apart from offering an apparent sweetener to a settlement, could undermine his regime by opening up Iraqi society to a range of external influences. Fourthly, we must assume that the end of Saddam's rule will depend upon the mysterious ways of Iraqi politics, the quality of his physical protection, and, possibly, the ageing process.

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Rivers of repentance

Powell knew all about pride. His funeral showed that he died a humbler man

A funeral is more real than a memorial service. We went yesterday to St Margaret's, Westminster, to say farewell to Enoch Powell; the fact that his body was in the coffin, dressed as he had planned in his wartime uniform as a brigadier, made this a very different occasion from the ordinary service of thanksgiving for a life well spent.

John Biffen, in his address, referred to Enoch's "turbulent" political career; there was still some sense of turbulence even about the funeral. That is, of course, the word that Henry II used when sending the knights off to murder Thomas à Becket: "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" I doubt if anyone in the congregation was unaware of Enoch's political presence at the funeral, or failed to remember the occasions on which they had disagreed with him, as well as the issues on which they had been in agreement. His political life was one of struggle.

The congregation did include a number of Enochites, that loyal band who saw him as their hero, as almost infallible. But a much larger number were those, like myself, who had strongly differed from him on some issues, but had also found ourselves in agreement on others, or had come to realise that on a particular issue he had been right all along. Perhaps the extreme example of that mixed response was present in St Margaret's was Tony Benn, who had made the sharpest of all the speeches attacking Enoch Powell's view on immigration, but had also been close to him on the issues of Europe and the supremacy of Parliament. Tony Benn's presence was the tribute of one independent — and courageous — parliamentarian to another. Neither of them was afraid to be regarded as a turbulent spirit.

The funeral was not an establishment occasion. There was only one serving of former Prime Minister present, though Baroness Thatcher would certainly have been there if she had not been abroad, and was represented by her husband, Denis. The one who did attend was John Major; perhaps he was too nice for the harsh job of being Prime Minister, but, like Alex Douglas Home, that very quality has made him an excellent and increasingly admired former Prime Minister. For the rest, most of the politicians were those who, like Enoch himself, had held

office only briefly or not at all. The congregation was not exactly a *salon des refusés*, but it contained a fair number who had collided with the Establishment and lost by the encounter.

Enoch's views, on almost any political subject, were not calculated to win him promotion, but still less to win promotion for those who took them up. Sometimes they were wrong; more often they were right; but were thought to be premature; sometimes they seemed to be eccentric. He was, like Tony Benn, a dangerous man for a younger politician to follow.

St Margaret's yesterday had more than a sprinkling of the walking wounded of Enoch's campaign; it was rather like the Duke of Wellington's funeral, when the hearse was surrounded by grey beards who had lost one limb or another in Wellington's victories.

The choice of hymns and readings gave an indication of how Enoch had come to look back on his life. As at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, the congregation sang *Cwm Rhonda*. There was a certain Welshness about Enoch, certainly as a speaker with his rather high-pitched voice. Powell, Lloyd George and Bevan have been among the most powerful orators of the 20th century. All had this almost haunting Welsh quality. One line from *Cwm Rhonda*, "I am weak but thou art mighty", rang through the readings and other hymns; Enoch's Christianity had an insight into the power of God.

One of his daughters, Susan Day, read the passage from Ecclesiastes, "A time to every purpose under Heaven, a time to be born and a time to die." She read it remarkably well, forthright and with strength, very much her father's daughter. I was not sure whether I detected the slight Midland flattening of some vowel sounds which had been more noticeable in Enoch's elocution. "A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace... I have seen the travail, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it."

It seemed to me that Newman's hymn, *Lead, Kindly Light*, was the clearest statement of Enoch as Enoch. The second verse contains Newman's rejection of his own earlier intellectual pride:

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou should lead me on:
I loved to choose and see my path; but now lead thou me on.
O lead thou me on.
Lead me not in the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember that thou art God and I am dust.

Often enough congregations sing those words without their having any particular meaning. After all, most people do not "love to choose and see" their path. They are largely content to make their way through life as well as they can, without pretending to choose for themselves.

But Enoch was intellectually self-determined to an extraordinary degree. It was his greatest strength and his greatest weakness. It gave him his influence, but it cost him the prospect of power. At the close of his life he seems to have thought, if, as I imagine he did, he chose this hymn, that his pride had indeed ruled his will. For Newman, and therefore for Powell, this is the repentance of a Christian intellectual, but it is the repentance of men of powerful intellect and powerful ideas. Both Newman and Powell became humbler as they got older.

One could not attend this funeral without realising how fully alive Enoch Powell's ideas still are. The taxi-driver who took me to St Margaret's was one of his keen supporters on immigration: "He was right," he said. Those who were present at the funeral service, and those who stayed away, were defined by those ideas, and the sympathy or repugnance that they felt for one or other of them. Even those unnamed prelates who were reported as ducking uneasily over Enoch being allowed to spend the night in Westminster Abbey, showed their recognition that his

ideas are still important. The last dispute over someone thought to be unsuitable to lie in the abbey was in 1730, when similar clerics thought the Jerusalem Chamber would be milled by Anne Oldfield, the great comic actress. She, at least, had two sons by "partners" who never became her husbands; one of the boys was a Churchill, the great nephew of the Duke of Marlborough. It was Enoch's irregular ideas rather than irregular offspring which worried the modern bishops.

St Margaret's was as full as I've ever seen it, yet many people who had known Enoch well were not present because he had outlived them. He was an emotional man and the memory of his comrades who died in the Second World War brought tears to his eyes. In the most personally revealing of the many interviews he gave, to Anne Brown on BBC Radio in 1986, he spoke of "the guilt of the soldier who survives". In that interview he said that until sometime in 1944 he had assumed that he would be killed during the war. But he said something more than that. Anne Brown asked him: "How would you like to be remembered?" Enoch replied: "I should like to have been killed in the war."

He seems to have felt at least a similar tenderness towards the death of his early political colleagues. In 1979 he wrote a newspaper tribute to Reginald Maudling. That starts in a rather similar way: "In those early days of 1946 there were the three of us in the big first-floor room at 24 Wilton Street, the Conservative Party Parliamentary Secretariat. One is left. First Ian Macleod departed; and now Reggie Maudling is gone." I did not see many signs of the more recent Conservative Establishment at the funeral, though Lord Parkinson was there, looking as he always does, like a startled schoolboy with white hair. By the time of their deaths, both Macleod and Maudling had parted politically from Enoch; neither of them did, or could, support his 1968 "Rivers of blood" speech. But those who refer back to that period, and particularly those who regard Macleod as their inspiration, should recognise that, had they not gone first, both Ian and Reggie would certainly have been in St Margaret's yesterday. Both in his ideas and in his personality Enoch was a historic man.

In a bleak midwinter muddle

Not only skiers miss our snow, says Magnus Linklater

I learnt to ski in the Cairngorms in the days when boots were strapped on with leather bindings, and tractors dragged hardly enthusiasts to the top of a mist-shrouded piste, leaving them to hurtle down uncharted slopes. There was another difference in those days: we had snow. It is sometimes hard to remember the stuff. Standing on a Scottish hillside in shirt-sleeves last weekend, with a warm breeze on my face, spring flowers peeping through new grass, and the scent of spring in the air, it was hard to realise that this was February, Thomas Hardy's month. "When Frost was spectre-gray/And Winter's dress made desolate/The weakening eye of day". Winter? It seems to have been abolished. It's a depressing thought.

This week, they cancelled the Europa Cup alpine ski finals, which were due to be held in Scotland for the first time. You can't have a downhill race on heather; well, I suppose you can, but it would be significantly slower. The event will now be held in Italy, and Britain may not be able to vie for it again for another six years. The ski resorts are in despair. An industry, built up over a generation, is contemplating its worst season. Cairngorm, which reckons to have about 200,000 skiers spending a day on the slopes in a good year, has so far registered only 23,000. At Glencoe, where the Nevis Range centre expects 2,000 skiers a weekend, there are now only walkers.

The Winter Olympics in Japan thus makes painful viewing. It is not just the agony of seeing British women curlers cruelly robbed of victory by a single point just as we had learnt the finer points about "ends" and "sweeping" and were prepared to embrace a new national sport. It is not just the sobbing of Japanese ski-jumpers pushing themselves to unimaginable limits from terrifying heights. Or the bone-breaking falls at immense speed on the slalom. It is the sight of all that snow. Even the Duchess of York has enough of it in Verbit to fall and crack her shoulder.

Must we, then, adjust to the notion of a permanently sub-Mediterranean climate, a vague muddle of seasons between November and March, when damp autumns give way to a rain-drenched pre-spring, distinguished only from the real thing by the occasional winter gale? Hamish Swan, the phlegmatic chairman of the Cairngorm Charitable Company, prefers to take the longer view, remembering predictions in the 1960s of a new ice age in Britain — predictions that have yet to be realised. He concedes that global warming may indeed have given us a string of warmer winters, but prefers to emphasise evidence that may point a different way. The Gulf Stream, he says, is being pushed further south, and in 20 years or so we may be experiencing long cold winters and sub-Arctic conditions. It's just a question of waiting. "These green winters are nothing new," he says, "they're just another blip."

One man's blip, however, is another man's Seasonal Affective Disorder. A farming friend shakes his head sadly as he contemplates the disappearance of that cleansing period when hard frosts kill off lingering bugs, and a blanket of snow wraps the soil in its annual winter garment. He calls it "giving the earth a well-earned rest". In warm winters aphids survive, to cause havoc on early plants, having yet more spraying and yet more chemicals poured into the ground. Cattle, paradoxically, tend to go down with pneumonia when the climate is mild. "It's a fact that animals do better in cold weather," he observed. Some farmers in the Scottish Borders have started their spring drilling already — traditionally, it is a March activity. And though this means an earlier harvest, there is some foreboding about the possibility of an unexpected frost which could yet kill off the early crops. "We're all looking over our shoulders," remarked my farming friend gloomily.

For the rest of us, the death of winter has less tangible effects. Instead of complaints about slush or sleet, the warmth seems to have been turned into a new source of discontent. "Verra mild for the time of year" has become the standard taxi-driver's comment up here, passed on more as a lament than a cause for satisfaction. The distant memory of glistening snow and frosted window-panes has induced a vague melancholy, the sadness one experiences over something lost. If this goes on too long, it may turn us all into a nation of malcontents, suffering from something we may have to find a name for — perhaps Wad, Winter Absence Depression. We may have complained about winter in the past. We now realise it's far worse without them.

It is important, however, to remain optimistic. I commend the remark made to me the other day by an Aberdeenshire councillor, in whose authority the Glenesh ski resort lies. He was agreeing that it had been a disastrous season — the snow had disappeared, and with it the thousands of visitors who bring much-needed revenue. "Aye, it's been bad," he said. "Mind you, they've had no problem at all with access."

Altar egos

ST PAUL'S Cathedral, which withstood Hitler's bombs so magnificently, is to deliver a posthumous snub to the man who led us through the Blitz. Churchill, senior figures want to build a grandiose and controversial altar on the spot where the wartime Prime Minister lay in state, covering the beautiful brass plaque dedicated to him. His coffin stood in front of the altar on January 30, 1965, to enable the nation to show its gratitude before his burial at Bladon. The news, I gather, has not gone down too well with the Churchills. Yellow sticky tape — and ominously — marks where the vast new altar will sit, covering a large stretch of marble floor. "His brass is not sacrosanct, so it could become something else entirely," suggests John Halliburton, Chancellor of St Paul's. "We will mark the spot even though it is covered."

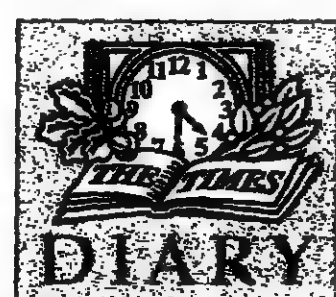
While parishioners are sympathetic to the idea of redesigning some of the cathedral to lend it a more intimate atmosphere, some feel that it is unacceptable to tamper with the memory of Churchill. "There are some strong feelings about this," says one closely associated with St Paul's. "If it wasn't for Churchill, the cathedral probably would not be standing." Opponents have won the support of Sir Winston's granddaughter, the delightful Celia Sandys: "As a notion it is a strange one. I can't understand why they would cover it up. I haven't been to



Last stand: Churchill vs St Paul's

St Paul's since the funeral, but it must have been one of the biggest events in the cathedral's history."

● UNLIKELY friends. Keith Allen, the unpredictable Shallow Grave actor, will soon come face-to-face with another bad boy — General Manuel Noriega, the former ruler of Panama. Allen will play old pineapple face in a West End play, The Archbishop and the General, set in the Vatican embassy in Panama on the night Noriega



surrendered to the Americans. Allen is travelling to the jail where Noriega is serving a 40-year sentence for drug-dealing. Leonard Nimoy — Mr Spock in Star Trek — will play the Archbishop.

● DAMP prospect. POOR John Prescott. He has never had much time for the Millennium Dome. Now Chumbawamba, who doused him with a bucket of water recently, has been lined up for a concert to open the millennium jamboree, in front of the Queen. The invitation, I suspect, was made before the group's cheap stunt at the Brit Awards. I am confident that nice Peter Mandelson will withdraw the invitation in deference to his good friend and senior, Prescott. The secretive New Millennium Experience Company be-

lieves that the offer was "not official". "The Spice Girls have asked to play," says a hard hat.

● SHE was considered the most beautiful of all Blair's Babes, but have the strains of political and married life taken the gloss from the lovely Yvette Cooper? After a recent burglary at her Yorkshire home, a policeman ignored the 28-year-old MP and turned to her husband, Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's adviser. "The MP lives here, doesn't she?" the officer ventured, before pointing at Yvette. "Could your mother help?" Even more insulting was the discerning



"Roll call"

taste of the thieves. They went through all the couple's CDs but decided none were quite the thing.

● SPACED out. LEMBIT OPK MP is in trouble with the space police after attempting to enlighten Welsh children about astronomy. Opik made a space rocket out of plastic, prompting The Directorate of Aerospace Policy to complain, claiming that the model could endanger commercial traffic. "They must be mad," says the MP. "They think I plan to fly it without a licence. It would fly as high as I can throw it and I refuse to remove it."

● MARIA JOAO PIRES, celebrated piano virtuoso, has fired off noisy audiences. At a gala concert in Lisbon the other night, she was unsettled by the incessant bleeping of phones, including that of Portugal's President. Halting her rendition of a Beethoven Piano Sonata, she told the crowd she was refusing to continue. Innocent listeners responded with hearty applause.

● PICTURE perfect. A FAVOURITE painting of Charles Dodgson — alias Lewis Carroll, author of Alice's Adventures in



Lilac girl up for sale

Wonderland — is to fall under the hammer of Christie's. The Lilac Girl, depicting the 12-year-old Elizabeth Turnbull, was painted by Sophie Anderson and bought by Dodgson in 1865. "I bought a picture of a child's head in profile," he recorded, "a beautiful child, I intended taking a photograph in the same attitude." Guide price? A snip at £18,000.

JASPER GERARD

OBITUARIES

Ernst Jünger, German writer, died on February 17 aged 102. He was born on March 29, 1895.

Ernst Jünger was among the most important writers of a generation that included Kafka, Brecht and Broch. Jünger's heroic exploits during the First World War provided the raw material for his first and most popular book, *In Stahlgewittern* (*Storm of Steel*). Though he remained aloof from practical politics, Jünger was seen by many as a gravedigger of the Weimar Republic.

With Heidegger, he belongs among the nationalist thinkers whose attempts to reconcile fascism and German philosophy failed to impress the Nazis, but whose influence outlasted the Third Reich. Ever since 1945, and especially since German reunification, Jünger has remained a cult figure on the German right. But though critics are still bitterly divided about his stature as a writer, in recent years his reputation has looked more secure. Though not the greatest writer of the 20th century, he was perhaps its greatest survivor.

Ernst Jünger was born in Heidelberg, the son of a pharmacist and inventor. He grew up near Manover, surrounded by medieval castles and primeval forests, the ancient Teutonic landscapes in which his novels are set. It was a cultivated and talented family. The mother had literary ambitions for her sons: both Ernst and his younger brother, Friedrich Georg, achieved renown as writers. Their father, also called Ernst, was an eccentric "anarchist", but dominating too. Ernst received a predominantly scientific training, and continued all his life to pursue entomological, zoological and botanical research, which he evidently found deeply satisfying. There are parallels with his Russian contemporary Nabokov, a passionate lepidopterist.

Alongside the contemplative, unemotional core of Jünger's complex and opaque character, however, there was a strong yearning for the *vita activa*, which could take wild forms. In 1913, bored by boarding school and dreading university, he ran away to join the French Foreign Legion — a farcical adventure, which ended when his father tracked him down in Morocco and rescued him from a court

martial. But in 1914 he enlisted at the first opportunity and spent the war on the Western Front: he kept diaries throughout.

War was the making of Jünger, but it was very nearly the death of him, too. As a lieutenant in the elite 73rd Infantry Regiment, he was almost constantly in action. He received 14 wounds and virtually every possible decoration, including the highest, the *Pour le Mérite*. On one occasion, he saved the life of his badly injured brother. Modern warfare first made its full impact on him at the Somme, and reached its apogee in March 1918. For Jünger, this vision of the apocalypse had metaphysical and ethical implications: the soldier who had endured hell on earth was a new kind of man, a new species, destined to rule. And the only values to survive were pain, suffering and sacrifice.

Having had a good war, however, Jünger was appalled by the German defeat. He carried on soldiering for the new Reichswehr until 1923, by which time he was, thanks to *Storm of Steel* (1920), a celebrity. The book retains an elemental power to this day. Its novelty consists in the detached, clinical quality of its descriptions. Though the author's underlying patriotism is never in doubt, he succeeds in reducing war to an aesthetic phenomenon, and thereby subverted the genre of war memoirs before most of them were written.

His next books — *Copse 125* and *Battle as an inner experience* — also drew on his diaries, but were also tracts aimed at the Weimar "system" which had set its face against war. The stabilisation of the Republic after the failure of various putsch attempts, including Hitler's, caused Jünger to resume belatedly his academic studies; dabbling in philosophy and science, spending long periods abroad, and working at the Marburg biological station in Naples. His natural passion is reflected in perhaps his most accomplished and original book, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* (*The adventurous heart*), 1929, extensively revised in 1934. This established his characteristic short prose form — anecdote, description, aphorism or meditation — frequently with a surrealist (or what would now be called magical) quality.

In 1925 he married and moved to Berlin,

ERNST JÜNGER



Jünger in 1919 wearing the *Pour le Mérite*, Germany's highest military award

where he plunged into political journalism. Together with his brother Friedrich, he became involved with the "National Bolshevik" Ernst Niekisch, who favoured a rapprochement with Russia against the West. From this milieu there emerged one of his most ambitious books, *The Worker* (1932): his only full-blown work of political theory, which envisioned a permanent command economy of the kind created in wartime, populated by a new kind of

worker, who is essentially a civilian *Frontsoldat*. His worker state is more communist than fascist, but underlying this technocratic utopia is a pessimistic critique of modernity close to Heidegger's. Meanwhile Jünger also flirted with the Nazis, then at their lowest ebb and eager for fashionable converts. On two occasions he wrote for the Nazi Party organ *Völkischer Beobachter*, and he was cultivated by Goebbels, who like most

Nazis admired his war books. But after turning down Hitler's offer of a Reichstag seat in 1927, Jünger gradually distanced himself from the party, which he never joined. Goebbels wrote him off as a dreamer and aesthete, but he continued to enjoy the status of a war hero even after 1933, when he withdrew from politics, refused to join Nazi literary organisations, and left Berlin for "inner emigration" in Goslar. When the Nazis took over his ideas, he did not protest; however, he never wrote Nazi propaganda, nor did he sign petitions in support of Hitler or against emigrés. He destroyed his journals after the Gestapo searched his house after arresting Niekisch, and his travel books *Myrdan* and *Atlantic Journey* (published after 1945) contain hidden messages of disaffection.

His books enjoyed great success until he provoked the Nazi authorities with his bold and prescient allegory of dictatorship, *Auf den Marmorklippen* (*On the Marble Cliffs*), which was published in 1939 but banned in 1940. The novel depicts an idyllic country, the Marina, devastated by the cruel forces of the forest Ranger, a thinly-disguised portrait of Goering. The novel includes a horrifying evocation of a death camp, but its atmosphere is archaic, reminiscent of an ancient Nordic saga. It is not a call to arms, but a *Götterdämmerung*, though it was read by the German Resistance, its ethos is stoical and resigned.

Jünger rejoined the army as a captain in 1939 but, apart from a brief visit to the Caucasus which inspired his postwar utopian novel *Heliopolis*, he spent most of the war in occupied Paris. Though he saw action only once, his war diaries are regarded as among his best works; as cold-blooded as ever, but tinged with humility, especially after his son, Ernstel, was killed in 1944.

His *Der Friede* (*The Peace*, 1941-43) reflected the views of those who were to participate in the July 1944 plot against Hitler, who circulated it in typescript. Jünger, under the protection of General Speidel, managed to remain uninvolved. *Der Friede* advocated a German dominated, anti-Soviet federation of European states, based on a Christian ethic. Fortunately not to have fallen victim to Hitler's purge, he was dishonourably discharged in October 1944.

But as the war ended Jünger found himself again the object of suspicion, this time by the Allies; there was even talk of trying him at Nuremberg, and he went into Swiss exile. But he was held in high esteem in France, particularly by Cocteau, and the publishing ban imposed by the Allies was lifted. After returning to settle in the remote Swabian hamlet of Willingen, he continued his industrious writing career, but his eldest views rendered him unfashionable. Even his pioneering experimentation with hallucinatory drugs could not restore him to favour.

He outlived all his contemporaries: unlike his friends Heidegger and Carl Schmitt, Jünger could legitimately dissociate himself and his work from the Nazis, and he enjoyed an Indian summer in the last decades of the century. His postwar books became less martial in vocabulary, and he created a successor to his archetypal Soldier and Worker: *der Waldgänger* (*the forest pathfinder*). Thus Jünger, with his over preference for the natural world over the human, could be rehabilitated as a prophet of the Greens, though he never endorsed them. Emerging rarely from his hermit-like seclusion, he received the homage of admirers such as Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, without departing from his scepticism towards liberal democracy. He may have mellowed, but he never gave an inch.

Jünger's literary achievement is voluminous; among German writers, perhaps only Goethe and Thomas Mann enjoyed such productive careers. Compared with these titans, Jünger's oeuvre has few themes. His shrewdest critic, J.P. Stern, summed them up as: death, war and the depersonalisation of man. Stern believed that Jünger had posed the right questions, but the linguistic and moral impoverishment of his response "relegates him to the second-rate". But Jünger's defects of sense and sensibility indubitably and uniquely reflect those of his age, his culture and his language. His greatness lies in his attempt to transcend a time in which the very possibility of transcendence was denied to mankind. He was, indeed, the last Nietzschean.

Ernst Jünger's first wife died in 1960. He is survived by his second wife, Liselotte, whom he married in 1962.

KENNETH WEEKES

Kenneth Weekes, West Indian cricketer, died on February 9, aged 66. He was born on January 24, 1932.

ALTHOUGH he played in only two Test matches for West Indies, Kenneth Weekes batted memorably at the Oval in the second of them, racing to a 110-minute century. It was to be the last Test anywhere for almost seven years, for only days after Weekes's bombardment of England's bowling, Europe was at war and the Caribbean cricketers were on an early ship home. Their last seven matches — including one against Billy Butlin's XI at Skegness — had been cancelled.

Weekes, a cousin of the far better known Everton Weekes (one of the famous postwar 3Ws), had risen swiftly from Jamaican club cricket to win a place on the 1959 tour. He had scored 1,000 runs in a club season, and hit 106 on his debut for Jamaica at Sabina Park against the touring Oxford & Cambridge side. An 88 against Trinidad at Port-of-Spain followed, then 100 not out in a tour trial match (this century coming in, for him, the very slow time of 3½ hours).

He was selected for the 1959



tour of England, under Rolf Grant's captaincy, principally as a back-up in the wicket-keeping department to Ivan Barrow and Derek Seal, and he had a stuttering start with the bat. In June, however, half-centuries against North-

amptonshire, Minor Counties (at Lord's) and Leicestershire secured him a Test debut at Lord's, where he made a quick 20 and 16, in the first caught one-handed at cover on the run by Gimblett off a swirling aerial hit — Leaside Constans-

tine said it was the best catch he had ever seen — and caught at the wicket off Verity in the second innings. The legendary George Headley, Weekes's team-mate at Lucas, Jamaica, scored two centuries in the match, the second time he had done so against England, but young Hutton and Compton had set up England's victory with a stand of 248 in only 140 minutes in the first innings.

An attractive 123 against Norfolk was not enough to save Weekes's place for the second Test, but a career-best 146 against Surrey at the Oval backed by half-centuries against Somerset and Warwickshire earned him a recall for the final Test. England made 352. Hardstaff scoring 94, Norman Oldfield (on debut) 80, Hutton 73 and Tyrell Johnson, the slender Trinidadian, taking Keeton's wicket with his first ball in Test cricket.

West Indies' reply, against an England attack lacking Bowes and Verity, was shaping well until Headley was run out. Constans went cheaply, but from 164 for 4, Weekes and Victor Stollmeyer (stumped off Goddard for 96 in the only Test innings of his life) virtually doubled the score in the next 100 minutes. The left-handed Weekes began nervously, then

hit 11 runs off an over by Reg Perks, who, with Nichols, conceded 43 off four overs with the new ball.

Weekes, unorthodox of stance and footwork, took four fours in a row off Perks, having been dropped off Wright when 52. During the height of the West Indian onslaught (Constantine was soon belting 79 with 50 in boundaries) England's fast bowlers dispensed with their slip fieldsmen, and the number of men patrolling the outfield made it seem like a charity match.

Weekes's blazing progress was interrupted by a thunderstorm after tea, and when he was eventually caught by Hammond high to his right at slip off Nichols, he had made 137 at a run a minute, with a six off Hutton and 18 fours. The tourists finished 146 ahead but a record stand of 264 in only three hours by Hutton and Hammond made England safe, capping some golden memories which cricket-lovers had to make last through the long years of world war.

Kenneth Hummel Weekes, known as "Ban Ban" for his extraordinary aggression at the batting crease, remains the only American-born Test cricketer. His father was from Barbados, his mother from Jamaica, where he grew up, but he was born in Boston, Massachusetts.

In his short first-class career he made 1731 runs at an average of 40.26, with four centuries, and held 21 catches, with one stumping. He also took 12 wickets (38.67). His three Test innings in 1959 left him with a distinguished lifetime average of 57.67.

Retiring to New York after his meteoric cricket career, Weekes was later employed as a nurse. His death leaves only J. H. Cameron as a survivor of that last West Indies Test team before the Second World War. Weekes leaves a widow, Viola, and six children.

PHILIP TIBENHAM

Philip Tibenham, television journalist, died from lung cancer on January 24 aged 66. He was born on April 30, 1931.

PHILIP TIBENHAM'S voice was a rare instrument: authoritative, expressive and timeless. His reporting style — understated, without a trace of bluster or aggression — made him one of Britain's most successful television journalists. Off-camera, in a profession where both qualities are in short supply, he displayed humility and humour.

Originally a print journalist for the *Birmingham Post* and the *Daily Mirror*, he joined the BBC in 1964 as a regional news reporter, graduating to London-based current affairs programmes such as *24 Hours*, the second *Tonight* and the early evening news magazine *Nationwide*, all based at the BBC's old Lime Grove studios. He fulfilled *Nationwide*'s insatiable appetite for stories about lost dogs and singing dogs as amiably and professionally as he wrote and presented major documentaries for *Panorama*.

As an interviewer, he was inquisitive without being invasive. Sensitive to the nuances of television, he could indicate disbelief with a simple look. While rival reporters hectorred, he probed gently.

For his 1982 *Panorama* investigation *The Islamic Bomb*, he interviewed a Swiss businessman accused of helping Pakistan to acquire a nuclear arsenal. Having put a question, he then famously sat in silence for two long, painful minutes before his subject could bring himself to respond. The answer, when it came, was typically revealing.

His style was much more effective for being non-gladiatorial. People talked easily to him because he listened, and seemed to care. Indeed, some of the stories he reported moved him to silent tears.



While filming a famine in Africa, he spoke affecting about television's casual brutality, its need for incessant human drama: how it betrays the unfortunate, extracts emotion, then moves on. At the same time he could be disarmingly reckless, once commandeering the piano in an expensive Nairobi hotel at midnight to entertain Kenya's astonished élite with a song about President Kenyatta's human rights record before being hustled off to safety by his crew.

Full of contradictions, Philip Tibenham was both the interrogator of presidents and kings and also something of an innocent at large in a harshly competitive profession. He was more reticent than many of his peers and constitutionally disinclined to any form of bumptious self-promotion. His films, he felt, should speak for themselves. He reported from thirty coun-

tries, made a stream of exceptional documentaries for *Panorama* and was rewarded with prizes from, among others, the Royal Television Society and the Monte Carlo Television Festival.

Yet in the mid-1980s, when BBC Television purged a dozen of its best-known reporters, Philip Tibenham was one of them. It was a decision that to both victims and survivors, seemed cruel and irrational, losing *Panorama* one of its most authoritative voices. However, as a freelance, he continued to present innumerable documentaries and series for the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, including the memorable series *Thatcher: The Downing Street Years*. He joined Central TV in Birmingham and, when Carlton took over the Midlands ITV franchise, he stayed on, as a valued reporter and programme editor.

He leaves his widow, Molly, and three sons.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FOR SALE

A BRITISHMAN Newspaper, Oxford, 1997-1998, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, 2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, 2035-2036, 2037-2038, 2039-2040, 2041-2042, 2043-2044, 2045-2046, 2047-2048, 2049-2050, 2051-2052, 2053-2054, 2055-2056, 2057-2058, 2059-2060, 2061-2062, 2063-2064, 2065-2066, 2067-2068, 2069-2070, 2071-2072, 2073-2074, 2075-2076, 2077-2078, 2079-2080, 2081-2082, 2083-2084, 2085-2086, 2087-2088, 2089-2090, 2091-2092, 2093-2094, 2095-2096, 2097-2098, 2099-2100, 2101-2102, 2103-2104, 2105-2106, 2107-2108, 2109-2110, 2111-2112, 2113-2114, 2115-2116, 2117-2118, 2119-2120, 2121-2122, 2123-2124, 2125-2126, 2127-2128, 2129-2130, 2131-2132, 2133-2134, 2135-2136, 2137-2138, 2139-2140, 2141-2142, 2143-2144, 2145-2146, 2147-2148, 2149-2150, 2151-2152, 2153-2154, 2155-2156, 2157-2158, 2159-2160, 2161-2162, 2163-2164, 2165-2166, 2167-2168, 2169-2170, 2171-2172, 2173-2174, 2175-2176, 2177-2178, 2179-2180, 2181-2182, 2183-2184, 2185-2186, 2187-2188, 2189-2190, 2191-2192, 2193-2194, 2195-2196, 2197-2198, 2199-2200, 2201-2202, 2203-2204, 2205-2206, 2207-2208, 2209-2210, 2211-2212, 2213-2214, 2215-2216, 2217-2218, 2219-2220, 2221-2222, 2223-2224, 2225-2226, 2227-2228, 2229-2230, 2231-2232, 2233-2234, 2235-2236, 2237-2238, 2239-2240, 2241-2242, 2243-2244, 2245-2246, 2247-2248, 2249-2250, 2251-2252, 2253-2254, 2255-2256, 2257-2258, 2259-2260, 2261-2262, 2263-2264, 2265-2266, 2267-2268, 2269-2270, 2271-2272, 2273-2274, 2275-2276, 2277-2278, 2279-2280, 2281-2282, 2283-2284, 2285-2286, 2287-2288, 2289-2290, 2291-2292, 2293-2294, 2295-2296, 2297-2298, 2299-2300, 2301-2302, 2303-2304, 2305-2306, 2307-2308, 2309-2310, 2311-2312, 2313-2314, 2315-2316, 2317-2318, 2319-2320, 2321-2322, 2323-2324, 2325-2326, 2327-2328, 2329-2330, 2331-2332, 2333-2334, 2335-2336, 2337-2338, 2339-2340, 2341-2342, 2343-2344, 2345-2346, 2347-2348, 2349-2350, 2351-2352, 2353-2354, 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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19 1998

Heavy discounting sees sales equal peak levels of Eighties

High street boom fuels rate fears

By ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

HIGH STREET spending reached levels not seen since the peak of the 1980s boom in January, reviving fears in the City that interest rates are set to rise again.

Retail sales surged by 1.8 per cent between December and January, as shoppers rushed to take advantage of discounts in the winter sales.

The annual rate of sales growth climbed from 5 per cent in December to 6.9 per cent — the highest figure since June 1988.

The rise, which was around twice the level the City had been expecting, could tip the Bank of England into making

another interest rate rise as soon as next month. The Bank shocked the markets last week with a warning in its Quarterly Inflation Report that interest rates may still have to rise above 7.25 per cent to head off the threat to inflation from the strong labour market and robust consumer demand.

The minutes of the January Monetary Policy Committee meeting also revealed that the Bank was split down the middle over the need for an immediate rise, despite the economic data at the time pointing tentatively to a cooling economy.

The interest rate threat, however, failed to dent optimism on the stock market, which climbed to a record for the second consecutive day.

MR GEORGE IS FINALLY REAPPOINTED

EDDIE GEORGE was finally reappointed as Governor of the Bank of England for a further five years yesterday, ending weeks of uncertainty about his position (Janet Bush writes).

Amid speculation of tense relations between Mr George

and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, not least over their different instincts on British membership of the single currency, the City had been increasingly unsettled over the delay in confirming Mr George's appointment.

Mr George's next contract

starts in July and ends in 2003. If Labour wins a second term, Mr George may witness a referendum on the euro and perhaps see a lifetime's work at the Bank passed on to the European central bank.

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December to register a monthly rise of 1.6 per cent, pushing the annual rate of increase to 8.2 per cent. However, last week's inflation data showed prices in the sector falling at a record rate, suggesting consumers had made a bee-line to the winter sales. Sales of household goods, which were also heavily discounted, rose by 12 per cent compared with January last year.

Food sales performed strongly, rising by 2 per cent during the month, although prices slipped and some of the increase may reflect the trend for supermarkets to move into sectors such as the clothing and footwear market.

Economists said the strong data could persuade the Bank to raise rates. However, most

were sceptical that the figures implied a rate rise is necessary to control high street inflation. Nick Vaughan, UK economist at Barclays Capital, said much of the growth reflected the low prices available and that the parallels with the 1980s boom were limited. The retail sales deflator, a measure of high street inflation, stood at 0.4 per cent in January, compared with 3.1 per cent in June 1988. Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets, added: "It's difficult to see where any future sales strength is going to come from. January's sharp rise in volumes has all the marks of a final blow out before a period of retrenchment."

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Fresh £100m windfall for Woolwich investors

By RICHARD MILLS, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

WOOLWICH, the building society that floated on the stock market last summer, delighted its new shareholders yesterday with the announcement of a £100 million special dividend.

The 6.5p special dividend, added to the total dividend of 9.5p, will put £105 in the pockets of the hundreds of thousands of former Woolwich members who received the average windfall package of 657 shares.

The news, plus confirmation by John Stewart, chief executive, that the bank is to seek authorisation to return a further £100 million to £200 million of excess capital to shareholders later this year, sent the shares racing upwards. They closed 6.5 per cent up, at 395.25p, adding about £400 million to the bank's market capitalisation. The launch price was 370p.

In its first full-year results since listing in July, the group unveiled a 16 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £455.7 million, and announced a 6.5p final dividend. Earnings per share rose to 15.6p, from 14.9p.

However, Woolwich's net lending collapsed from £1.45 billion in 1996 to just £739 million, more than halving its market share to 3.1 per cent. Woolwich was also hit by a huge outflow of savings as investors withdrew deposits worth £595 million. The bank attributed both declines to the

conversion factor — former members changing banks after receipt of their windfall.

Income from non-traditional businesses such as fund management and life insurance fared better, rising by 19 per cent, to £219.3 million, but this included 15 months for some product lines because of a change in year-end for the accounts. Expenses included £53.3 million for the conversion process, plus a writedown of £11.7 million for the group's computer centre. Redundancy costs came to £6.5 million as Woolwich restructured its branch network.

Woolwich said that it would retain its remaining £700 million of surplus capital to finance organic growth or joint ventures. Mr Stewart effectively ruled out acquisitions because of the high prices of target companies. The bank itself has five years' protection from predators, provided that if it does not seek to buy, or merge with, another financial services company.

Mr Stewart said that he hoped to shift the balance of profits so that non-interest income would account for 20 per cent of the total, compared with its current 10 to 12 per cent contribution. He also said that Woolwich would continue to expand on the Continent, where interest margins are far bigger than in the UK.

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Christopher Burge, chairman of Christie's auction house, takes bids in New York at what became the \$29 million sale of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*

Christie's going, going but in the end not gone

By MARTIN WALLER

TALKS broke down yesterday between Christie's International, the international auction house, and a merchant bank fronting a consortium of rich individuals trying to buy the company.

SBC Warburg-Dillon Read had been acting on behalf of a group of mainly anonymous investors including Joe Lewis, once named as Britain's richest man and owner of almost 30 per cent of the company.

The bank approached the auction house in December and talks have been continuing since, but they foundered yesterday over price.

A formal statement read: "Christie's has engaged in

discussions with SBC Warburg but the parties have not been able to agree a proposal which the board of Christie's would be able to recommend to shareholders."

The company will announce results for the year to December 31 this morning, and the market is expecting record pre-tax profits of more than £40 million, up from £33.9 million in 1996. The auctioneer had been looking for an offer worth at least £3 a share, or £500 million, while the consortium was unwilling to bid more than the current market price but wanted an agreed deal. Christie's shares closed at 265p, a rise of 5p, after

reaching 276p following a premature report that a £3 offer had been received.

Warburg was acting on behalf of Mr Lewis, who had declined to use his stake as a platform to bid for the rest of the company, and a collection of up to a dozen wealthy individuals, thought to include John Lattis, the shipping tycoon. The bidders had argued that rising prices in the art world and the increasing capital risk to art houses taking on large collections for resale meant the business was unsuited to a publicly quoted company.

Commentary, page 27



City braced for Safeway gloom

By FRASER NELSON

COLIN SMITH'S position as chief executive of Safeway came under increased pressure yesterday as the supermarket chain parted company with its trading director and braced the City for a dismal Christmas trading statement.

Safeway shares fell by 10.4p, to 371.4p, after the company said that George Charters is no longer head of category management after failing to "add value" to the post. Although Mr Charters is entitled to a £530,000 payoff, he is expected to settle for much less.

The City now expects Safeway to issue a mild profits warning on Tuesday, marking Mr Smith's last chance to steer the company to recovery. If no improvement is achieved at

the half-year stage, City analysts expect him to resign. The supermarket chain, Britain's fourth largest, will say that it lagged Sainsbury, Tesco and Asda over Christmas, with underlying growth staying around 2 per cent in the three months to mid-February.

Trading was held up by a breakdown in its central computer, which failed to process information from bar-code scanners. This led to empty shelves and late arrival of fresh food. Pricing problems made many goods too dear and the range others too cheap, and the range of food was out of kilter with target customers in key stores. Although these matters fell under Mr Charters's remit, City analysts said that he has been used as a scapegoat.

Buffett Curse strikes Nike's share price

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

NIKE, the world's largest sports shoe company, has been hit by what is known on Wall Street as the Buffett Curse.

Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor, is believed to have bought a stake in Nike and now a legion of small investors are following his example.

Nike shares rose 4 per cent yesterday after climbing 8 per cent on Tuesday. The Curse was triggered by a single report on a business television programme.

The last sector to suffer the Buffett Curse was silver. Mr Buffett, America's second wealthiest man after Bill Gates, declined to comment.

Botnar issues writ against Revenue

By JASON NISSE

OCTAV BOTNAR, the former head of Nissan UK, yesterday issued a writ against the Inland Revenue claiming malicious prosecution in its criminal case against him, which was dropped last year because of Mr Botnar's ill health.

The 84-year-old, who said he was too ill to travel from Switzerland to appear in court, is asking for an early hearing of the civil case. He may even travel to London for the hearing, though it is likely that his lawyers will ask the court to allow a video link to his home near Geneva.

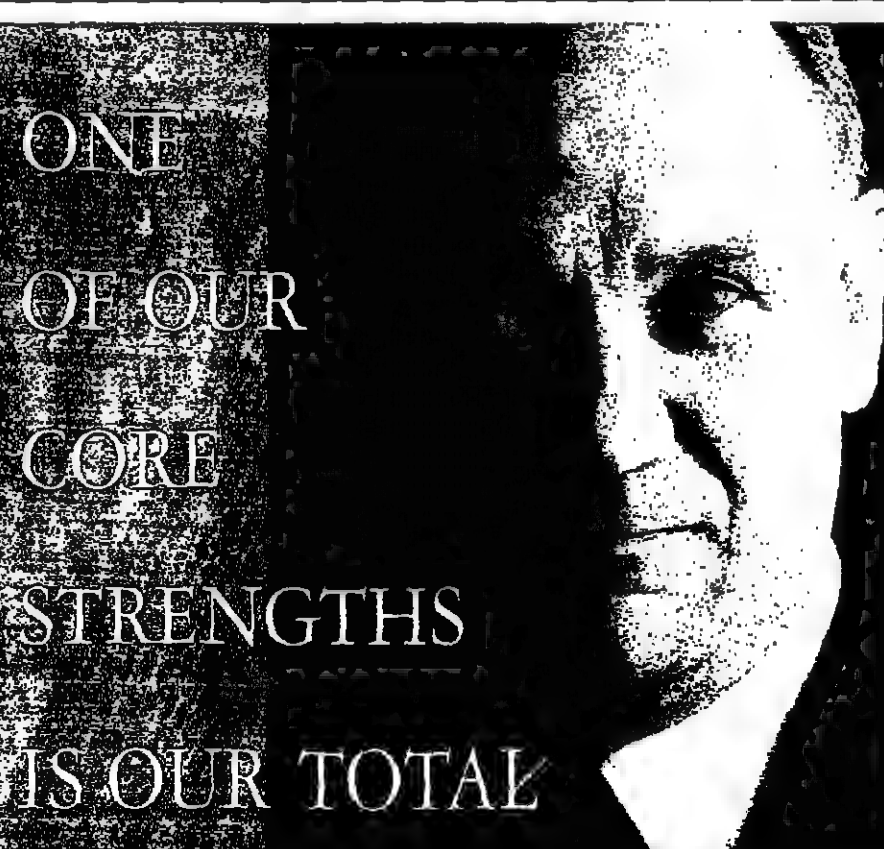
Mr Botnar's action claims damages from the Revenue and Bob Brown and Tim Cawdron, two officers from its Special Enforcement Office.

Both have since left the Revenue and are now working for leading accountancy firms.

Mr Botnar alleges that the Revenue pursued a vendetta against him after launching the largest ever raid by Revenue officers at Nissan UK's offices in Worthing, Sussex in 1991. The Revenue's action led to two former Nissan UK directors being jailed for tax fraud and a settlement of tax claims worth £59 million by Nissan UK and Mr Botnar.

The action is unusual, but not unique. In the late 1970s Rossminster, a tax advice company, sued the Revenue for alleged malicious procurement of a search warrant.

The Revenue yesterday said it would defend Mr Botnar's action vigorously.



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Playing chicken with interest



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Britain's high streets were booming in January but it certainly was not a bonanza for retailers who only achieved volume by desperately shredding their margins. It was clear in the run-up to Christmas that consumers were playing a game of chicken with retailers, zipping their wallets firmly shut in the hope of pre-Christmas sales. They got exactly as they wanted as retailers panicked. The same story, writ large, can be told of January when sales jumped but sales discounts hit all time records.

Yesterday's figures will be seized upon by interest rate hawks who are worried that the British consumer shows no sign of feeling the ill-effects of successive rises in interest rates even as the evidence grows that manufacturing industry, and particularly exporters, suffer from the strength of the pound and the chill winds blowing in from straitened Asian economies.

This combination could not be worse for the overall balance of the economy. Weak exports coupled with strong domestic demand spells trouble ahead for Britain's balance of payments.

It could be argued that there is very little wrong with British men and women spending some of the fruits of their hard work after six years of economic recovery, as long as it does not lead to dangerous inflationary pressures in the economy. Given that January saw underlying inflation

hit the Government's target for the first time since May, this seems to be the case.

Nevertheless, there is a clear and growing dilemma for policy-makers whether they are sitting on the Monetary Policy Committee or in the Chancellor's office at the Treasury. We already know that three out of eight on the MPC wanted rates raised in January. They are unlikely to have changed their minds and yesterday's sales figures may now persuade some of the current doves to join them.

But raising rates is a bad strategy. It has the potential of pushing the pound even higher and exacerbating the problems of our exporters. It also has the perverse effect of raising the headline rate of inflation, which includes mortgage interest payments, just at a time when the spring round of wage negotiations is getting underway. Wage negotiators still look at the headline rate as a guide to settlements and a rate rise now would exacerbate the very wage pressures that are the main worry for doves and hawks alike.

The Chancellor, who delivers his Budget next month, also has a problem. The best policy for developing more balance in the

economy would be a large tax rise that would rein in the consumer without hitting industry. But figures early this week showed that the public finances are in a state of embarrassingly rude health and likely significantly to undershoot Treasury projections.

Gordon Brown already has a reputation as a parsimonious Scot without announcing a large tax rise when the Government's deficit is fast disappearing.

Safeway offers sacrificial lamb

Shortly after Christmas, the Safeway store nearest the offices of *The Times* in Wapping had a rather unusual January sale. Piles and piles of mince pies were discounted heavily in the hope of attracting those who had not overindulged in Yuletide gluttony and were on the hunt for a bargain. This was

not another case of retailers playing chicken with shoppers. It was a simple case of overordering and poor marketing by the weakest of the big four supermarket chains. So it is hardly surprising that yesterday the guillotine that appears to be erected at Safeway's Middlesex headquarters slammed down on the exposed neck of George Charters, the group's former managing director of marketing and trading.

According to Safeway, Mr Charters's job disappeared. He was squeezed between the technical know-how of Colin Smith, the chief executive with the accountancy background, and the marketing brilliance of Roger Partington, the so-called whiz-kid (though he is actually 41) who oversaw the Harry & Molly campaign. It seems more that he is a scapegoat, sent over the cliff with up to £550,000 in his pocket, to show that Safeway is really concerned about its current trading and is doing something about it. The fear in the marketplace is that next week's Christmas trading statement will be every bit as awful as that produced by J Sainsbury.

Unlike Sainsbury, though, Safeway's statement will not have any redeeming features. Indeed this piece of bad news will come on top of the profits warning in November, which is now also blamed on the hapless Mr Charters. Then it was claimed that a computer crash in August had thrown all the buying for the stores out of sync, which led to a shortage of fresh food in some stores and mispricing elsewhere.

Then Mr Charters was reclassified as "category management director", a term so vague that the position would not be missed if it disappeared. The question is, will Mr Charters's departure change anything? Safeway's problems stem not from who is on the board, but who is missing — namely anyone

with a real idea of how to compete with the likes of Tesco. The City views Safeway as a sitting duck, merely waiting for time that Asda strikes. Perhaps it is time for a defensive merger, and the most obvious target has to be Wm Morrison, the supermarkets group based in Yorkshire and which makes up for its lack of size with a wealth of inspiration.

Rolls-Royce driven by BMW

If you were organising an auction of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, you could hardly have handled it in a more ham-fisted fashion than Vickers. Let's start with the announcement of the disposal, coming only a few days after Vickers' results announcement at which the Sir Colin Chandler, chairman, denied there would be any such sale. This appeared to be tied up with the aggressive bid from Mayflower, which Vickers expertly smoked out and fought off, showing that in some instances the engineering group can be pretty good at this old corporate finance game.

Going back to Rolls-Royce, Vickers slipped up by not sorting

out with Rolls-Royce plc beforehand who owns the brand name, so causing avoidable interference. Vickers then let the sale process drag on indefinitely, claiming there were half a dozen interested parties. Yet all along it has been going forwards with the development of a new range of cars, powered by BMW engines. If this did not put BMW enough in the driving seat on this deal, then the revelation yesterday that the BMW-powered Rolls-Royce will be launched in the next fortnight put the steering wheel and the gear stick in the hands of the boys from Munich.

If the other bidders had not been scared off before, they almost certainly will be now. Vickers much hoped that BMW is feeling generous. Otherwise the auction of such a prestige marque will command a good £100 million less than the £400 million Vickers had hoped.

On the block

The attempt by SBC Warburg Dillon Read to take Christie's private has failed. But it cannot be the last. The nature of auctioneers is that they are taking increasing balance sheet risk and this makes them less suitable to be public companies. Investors find it hard to understand Christie's and its even more volatile rival, Sotheby's, and will not value them as highly as those that are closest to them — their managements.

Kroll finds itself under scrutiny in court case

By ADAM JONES

THE cloak-and-dagger mystique of Kroll Associates, the corporate detective agency, faces public scrutiny after a row with former directors spilled over into the High Court in London.

Kroll, which is based in New York, was hit by staff defections in Europe last year, after a merger with O'Garra, an American public company, that manufactures surveillance cars.

Some senior employees, including Irish Turle, who ran Kroll's European operations, left the Kroll agency to set up a business intelligence and corporate investigation firm called Risk Advisory Group, operating in London.

Kroll Associates UK has now issued a High Court writ against four former directors, who all work for Risk Advisory Group now. The writ claims damages for alleged breach of employment contract and alleged breach of fiduciary duty.

The directors targeted in the case are Mr Turle, a former member of the SAS who co-founded the Control Risks group; Bill Waite, a former Serious Fraud Office lawyer; Richard Bradley, the former chairman of Kroll Associates Europe; and David Crichton-Miller, a former McKinsey consultant.

Kroll has also accused Mr Turle of "fraudulent misrepresentations" in conversations that took place with Jules Kroll, the founder of the international agency, and Michael Cherkasky, the current president and chief operating officer of Kroll Associates.

It is seeking to rescind a contract dated September 17, 1997, claiming breach of duty and misrepresentation, and recover unspecified sums already paid.

Kroll is also seeking to rescind 1997 contracts with Mr Waite and Mr Bradley, alleging breach of duty, and to recover unspecified sums already paid to the men.

Mr Turle, for his part, is suing Jules Kroll, claiming that he is due £165,000. He alleged the money was part of an orally agreed sum of £325,000 to buy out an entitlement to 10 per cent of the Kroll Associates UK shareholding equity.

He is also suing Kroll Associates UK, claiming that he is due £485,000 for the termination of his contract.

A spokesman for Kroll Associates said: "Since this is a pending court matter, we would not comment." Risk Advisory Group would not offer any comment yesterday either.



Airtours said margins for the winter season would be affected by the disruption to its Egypt and fly-cruise programmes after the terrorist attack at Luxor

Stronger demand for holidays lifts shares in Airtours

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

SHARES in Airtours, the UK's second largest tour operator, rose 6p to 423.5p yesterday on news of growing demand for winter and summer holidays, and despite reporting bigger than expected losses for its first quarter.

The market was cheered by comments from the company that winter holiday sales with the UK were up 8 per cent on last year because customers were making the most of sterling's strength. Demand for summer holidays is expected to grow by 6 per cent overall this year.

The operator warned the market, however, that margins for the winter season would be affected by the disruption to its Egypt and fly-cruise programmes after the terrorist attack at Luxor. Airtours has scrapped its programme to Egypt and moved its cruise ship MS Seawing to the Canary Islands.

Tim Byrne, finance director, said: "It will not have a major effect on profits but we do have to write to customers to tell them of the changed cruise itinerary and if they want their money back we have to sell the product in the later market."

Overall the group's turnover for the quarter rose by 22 per cent to £463 million. Airtours said that seasonal losses before tax in the three months ending December 31 1997 were £17.3 million against a loss of £12.1 million in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Analysts had been expecting losses of £15 million.

Airtours said that pre-tax losses for the North American Leisure Group had deepened from £1.9 million to £3.3 million because of the seasonal losses incurred by Suntrips and Sunquest in California which were included in group figures for the first time.

In Scandinavia margins were lower because of higher marketing and development costs in Finland and Poland. Flight delay costs and lower demand during the summer. Overall losses before tax were £2 million against a £25 million profit last year.

Bankers prop up Ronson

SHARES in Ronson, the cigarette lighter manufacturer, fell a further 2.5p to 4.5p yesterday after the company admitted that it was being propped up by its bankers as it awaited an emergency funding package (Chris Ayres writes).

The announcement came after the rejection last week of a £4.5 million offer for the company from a management buyout team and a venture capitalist, Shann Dowling. Ronson's chairman, was known to be unimpressed by the offer.

Sources close to Ronson yesterday said that if its major shareholder, Albion Consortium Fund, did not underwrite an emergency rights issue, the company was likely to collapse.

Ronson said that it expected an announcement to be made on the subject this week or next.

Southnews buys titles from United

By KATHY LIPARI

UNITED News & Media, owner of *The Express*, yesterday completed the first stage of its plan to offload its regional newspaper assets with a £47.5 million deal for the sale of its southern titles to Southnews.

It is understood that Southnews beat four other bidders for the business involving 28 free titles covering the London and South East market, first put up for sale over a year ago. Media sources suggested that Newsquest, Independent Newspapers and Johnston Press may also have submitted bids.

Southnews said it would fund the purchase through a combination of a placing and open offer of 4.8 million new shares at 435p on the basis of three shares for every ten, which would raise £19.6 million, and borrowings. United made no comment.

about the progress of the sale of its northern regional titles, including the *Yorkshire Post*, which remain on the auction block along with its Spanish magazines.

It is believed that Trinity International Holdings, the regional newspaper publisher, and Candover Investments and CVC Capital Partners, the venture capital groups, are still bidding for the northern titles. However, there are concerns that a deal with Trinity may encounter difficulties with the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Merrill Lynch, the broker, said the northern assets are worth up to £360 million, and the Spanish titles £50 million. Southnews also said that it expected profit before tax to be at least £7.2 million for the year to March 28, in line with expectations, up from £5.9 million in 1997.

Thriving Ireland lifts AIB

ALLIED Irish Banks yesterday singled out the Irish Republic's thriving economy as a major factor behind a 38 per cent rise in pre-tax profits (Richard Miles writes).

The Irish Republic, whose gross domestic product grew by 10 per cent last year, accounted for 40 per cent of AIB's 1997 profits of Ir£580 million (£501 million). Lending rose by 19 per cent, and retail deposits in the country increased by 12 per cent.

The bank said that it will continue to travel the UK market for possible acquisitions, although Declan McSweeney, chief financial officer, said that it had been discouraged by the high prices commanded in the market.

Operating income rose by 29 per cent, to Ir£1.68 billion. AIB is increasing its final dividend by 20 per cent, to Ir£0.9p, making a total dividend of Ir£1.7p.

Starwood chief gets his \$37m

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

SHAREHOLDERS of Starwood Lodging, the US investment trust, yesterday approved the takeover of ITT, owners of the Sheraton hotel chain.

This final step made Starwood the world's largest hotel group and triggered an instant \$37 million (£22.4 million) windfall for Barry Sternlicht, its chief executive.

The bonanza is the result of a restructuring of the share option scheme following the takeover, which allows executives to cash in existing options before signing a new, even more profitable options plan.

ITT executives will also receive a windfall. Around 650 employees will share \$110 million. Rand Araskog, ITT chairman, secured a \$55 million golden good-bye when Hilton Hotels started a takeover battle for ITT a year ago. ITT shareholders approved the deal on Tuesday.

age resignations by rewarding long-term performance.

Graef Crystal, a compensation specialist, said: "The whole idea is that there is never a point when you can quit and not lose something — they're called golden handcuffs. It's like the executives are giving themselves a pat on the back for taking over."

The bonanza is the result of a restructuring of the share option scheme following the takeover, which allows executives to cash in existing options before signing a new, even more profitable options plan.

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Compensation specialists emphasised the point of share option schemes is to discour-

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Good riddance to a deal no one wants



GRAHAM SEARGEANT

You might think it simple. Surely everyone agrees that companies building factories, shops and businesses in foreign countries should be treated equally before the law. In a global economy, inward investment can be even more valuable than trade. If foreign-owned companies do not get a fair deal, investment will be stifled and the world poorer.

In international trade, however, nothing is quite as simple as it used to seem. After three years of wrangling, talks to set up a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), broke down conclusively in Paris on Tuesday night. As usual, the supposedly plural debate ended in a private stand-off between France and America.

The break may not be irretrievable. Allowing for the usual brinkmanship in such talks, however, the chances of meeting the next "final" deadline for signing an agreement in April look slim.

Few seem to care, which is why the talks broke down. Neither diplomats nor industrialists are waiting or rendering their garments

in the streets. In many capitals there is secret relief. In spirit at least, some pressure groups for nature and developing countries are breaking open champagne.

They are, perhaps, right to do so. Since the end of the cold war, the world economy has made huge strides forward. Market forces and freer trade, for all the drawbacks and initial hardships, offer new hope of rising output, falling unit costs and producers actually selling what consumers want.

There have been some darker trends too. The drive to promote Western, especially American, interests has focused ever more on business and trade. As it does so, many countries that used to be on our side are now cast as enemies. And America, our greatest friend, often plays the bullying bad guy.

Western trade hawks seized on the currency crisis that spread round the tiger economies as

ammunition to shoot down the Asian economic model. Across the Atlantic, this moment of weakness has been hailed as a golden chance for a trade offensive.

In Washington, the IMF has picked up its shovel with glee to bury the East's heretical deviations from the norm. High savings and growth, mutually supporting business networks, and cosy co-operation between industry and government have all got to go. The IMF has been an agent for Western interests, insisting on irrelevant loan conditions such as hostile foreign takeover bids.

This was the spirit in which America originally called for an MAI. The immediate target was Japan, where attempts by American industry to penetrate the business culture have long been frustrated. The MAI was to include a right to sue for claimed discrimination. It was also an

early prototype for new trade deals. Instead of spending years trying to get everyone to agree on some shoddy compromise, North America, Europe and Japan would thrash out their differences, then present a *fait accompli* to the rest of the world. Michael Heseltine, when President of the Board of Trade, made it clear that the MAI would apply to developing coun-

tries. Such crude tactics can be justified if the object is in everyone's interest. The MAI talks fell at the first hurdle. They were restricted to the 29 industrialised members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Soon, however, Japan was able to sit quietly and let the EU and America slug it out.

France inevitably demanded exemption for cultural subsidies. Some countries wanted the MAI to impose social and environmental standards, using the agreement to regulate trans-national investment as well as opening it up. The talks fell, however, on American laws that impose sanctions on US subsidiaries of foreign groups whose parent companies trade with Cuba, Iran or Libya.

America argued that these laws fell outside the MAI. But you can see the point. If executives of foreign groups are barred entry to

the US, it looks discriminatory. Other countries could use equivalent laws to discriminate against foreign firms.

By then, the main parties seem to have gone off the idea anyway. EU countries routinely give special deals to promote inward investment that any decent MAI would rule out. And the playing field within the EU is far from even.

America has routinely discriminated against foreign companies at national level in anything from air travel and media ownership to nuts and bolts. At local level, official discrimination is often systematic. Canada was not pleased to be sued for \$200 million under a non-discrimination clause in the North American Free Trade Agreement when it imposed new environmental standards on chemicals made by a US firm.

Many of these problems might have been sorted out in exceptions

to the MAI, which would certainly include defence and some media sectors. But such a deal would ignore exceptions that are more important to others. Foreign financial services companies, for instance, have contributed to destabilising Asian markets, simply because they have less commitment to local markets.

An imposed MAI would cause more disputes than it would solve. It would also risk giving multinationals a bad name again. Most have spent the past 20 years earning respect for stability, higher than average ethical standards, pay rates and environmental performance.

The world's top companies are by far the biggest international investors. They are also, informally, the most accountable because their activities are visible to consumers and pressure groups round the world. Smart developing countries want to attract them. Such natural market forces are far more likely to secure good treatment for foreign investors than an unequal treaty.

Setbacks for Western oil groups fuel long-term gains for Opec

Disappointing production will mean cuts in exploration, says Carl Mortished

We have all been too bullish. That was the response of Mark Moody-Stuart, chairman of Shell Transport & Trading, as the world's largest oil company revealed that it had barely raised production last year.

He was right. Shell's output rose just 1 per cent in 1997, while a few days earlier, its rival BP announced a disappointing 2 per cent increase. Both companies had been targeting bumper increases of 5 per cent, and late last year, Enterprise Oil warned the market that its growth would be checked.

Demand for energy is growing at a steady pace, but the West's oil industry is failing to deliver the goods. Production is falling behind schedule from the North Sea to the Gulf of Mexico because of staff shortages, scarcity of equipment and technical foul-ups. The growth deficit has confounded the International Energy Agency which recently apologised for overestimating the output of oil from non-Opec suppliers (mainly the multinational oil companies). And recently Saudi Arabia used the shortfall as an excuse to push for higher quotas, raising Opec's production ceiling by 10 per cent.

The setback is embarrassing for the oil majors which have yet again been found guilty of hubris, but slower production growth in the West may have greater long-term consequences. Opec members are well aware that the West's oil industry is struggling and they also know that falling oil prices will restrict future investment. For the first time for decades, the core Gulf producers, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE could be in a position to grab market share and influence short-term prices. Long dismissed by oil traders, the Opec cartel might just be getting back in the saddle.

A decade of profligate exploration in the 1980s (ending in



Demand is growing but production is falling behind schedule because of staff shortages, technical problems and scarcity of equipment

near financial disaster for several companies) forced the oil industry to switch to a leaner diet for the 1990s. High-tech floating production vessels replaced the over-engineered concrete towers in the North Sea. Add to that a fast-track licensing policy adopted by the Department of Energy and the North Sea oil industry has been working on tighter production schedules than ever before. The worst delay has been an 18-month setback at BP's Foinaven field, West of Shetland, but Enterprise Oil has pushed back its production target by a year and oil companies are finding obstacles in their path wherever they turn, from bureaucracy to staff shortages and even hostage-taking in countries such as Nigeria.

The oil majors are also drilling in deeper water in search of bigger payouts from huge oilfields that justify billion-dollar investments. According to Morgan Stanley, the investment bank, the US majors are expecting a *sidelined* increase in the rate of production growth to 3.8 per cent by 2000 while their European rivals are even more confident, forecasting annual growth of 5.7 per cent. European exploration

companies expect growth to double from 5.5 per cent to 11.8 per cent by 2001.

Adam Seymour, analyst at Morgan Stanley, reckons these figures are too optimistic given the constraints of the oil service industry. In the North Sea, rig hire rates have soared to a 15-year peak. Semi-submersibles — rigs that can operate in water depths exceeding 3,000 feet — were on hire in 1995 for \$60,000 a day but today the going rate is more than \$200,000 a day. If you can find one.

In theory, such prices would encourage companies to build new capacity but the rig companies are wary, having had their fingers burnt in the last boom and shipyards are already chock-a-block with a two-year waiting list for new semi-submersibles. British Borneo has been forced to buy its own yard in order to build a new rig. Staffing problems are equally acute with poaching widespread for engineers and geophysicists. Leading oil companies, such as Shell Oil have been forced to offer their key staff golden handcuffs in order to fend off rival companies.

The irony is that oil prices are currently at a low ebb, sub \$15 per barrel oil ought to have

an impact on North Sea activity but so far the pent-up demand for rigs is allowing big contractors such as Global Marine and Reading & Bates to keep rates high. Mr Seymour said: "This story is going to run for two years. If companies like Shell are looking at \$14 to \$15 oil prices then there will be some cuts; shelving exploration in favour of development."

Shell has already confirmed that project expenditure is under review. Mr Seymour reckons that companies will shift expenditure from wildcats to development of fields to maximise short-term cash flow. Disappointment over the prospects in the new Atlantic Margin — the area West of Shetland — worsens the outlook. Reduced exploration spend in the North Sea is a trend; Wood Mackenzie's 1998 drilling survey showed a decline in new exploration wells last year with only eight wells drilled in the Atlantic Margin. The consultancy said: "If the oil price remains at or around its current relatively low level for several more months, we expect that this would begin to

impact on operators' planned exploration activity."

Less money to find oil and more spent on getting the stuff out of existing fields could accelerate the decline of the UK's fiscal honeymoon, with the oil industry shifting resources to the Gulf of Mexico, West Africa and Latin America. Oil production in the North Sea actually fell 1 per cent last year because of production setbacks which will be made up in the current year. But Mr Seymour reckons that less exploration and a drive to raise cash from existing wells will lead to one outcome: "We are looking at 1999 as the peak; we see production coming down from then."

Far away in the Persian Gulf, the world's cheapest oil producers are watching developments with interest as the oil price bumps along the bottom and storage tanks overflow with excess crude. The price trend favours no one short-term, but this business is long-term and Saudi Arabia is the most important producer, shifting eight to nine million barrels per day (bpd) and capable of delivering big swings in output on a whim.

If oil prices fall to single digit dollars, marginal production

will be cut swiftly. Morgan Stanley reckons that American stripper wells (the backyard ten barrel per day wells) could be shut in, reducing output by up to 400,000 bpd. Non-Opec production growth could again be no more than a million barrels per day for the next few years as the majors too trim their least profitable investments. But energy demand shows little sign of letting up, notwithstanding the Asian turmoil, growing perhaps at twice the rate of supply and that leaves Saudi Arabia with scope to gain market share and tweak the oil price.

Mr Seymour said: "I think they will send a signal like they did in 1995. They suddenly shifted 300,000 bpd from exports into storage. Within a few months, it was the beginning of the bull run in prices."

Much could change the picture, including a war in Iraq, but oil prices move with small shifts in the demand/supply balance. Saudi Arabia accurately predicted the past two years of weak non-Opec production and lobbied for higher Opec quotas. In the face of falling oil prices, when your game is long-term, you can take the short-term pain.

Wang sizes up to geeks with Science offer

In the grey world of semi-conductors, Charles Wang stands out like an Apple Mac among the PCs. The chief executive of Computer Associates has launched a \$9 billion (£5.5 billion) hostile bid for Computer Sciences, a rarity in the sector that has attracted much attention. He is aiming to build a software and computer support services empire to rival those of IBM and Microsoft.

But in contrast with such "geeks" as Bill Gates, who had to wait a decade to be recognised in Belgium (and got covered in custard pie), Mr Wang is already larger than life. Employees trade stories about his competitiveness and tenacity.

They relate the urban myth that a poor performance at a basketball game prompted Mr Wang to practise in the evenings and at the weekend, with his wife using a broom held above her head to simulate a defender. Sport is part of his programme of socialising with employees and instilling a sense of competition in them, even if he suffers as a result: one manager elbowed Mr Wang in the face and broke his nose during a basketball game. Fearing for his job, the employee apologised profusely, but Mr Wang smiled through the pain and promoted the manager.

Mr Wang is now wooing staff at Computer Sciences as well as the company's shareholders. In a letter to the employees, he wrote: "We will not have any layoffs as a result of a merger. In fact, we believe Computer Associates is the best place to work for any IT professional — we

were voted one of the 100 best companies in America for working mothers in 1997 by *Working Mother* magazine."

The Computer Associates Web site also tries to soften the Wang image. A cartoon depicts a boss sitting at his desk below the headline: How decisions are made. Fists clenched, the boss shakes his arms and counts "1-2-3". In the next frame, his arms rest on the desk, one hand still a fist, index and middle finger protruding on the other. "Rock Scissors!" he exclaims. In the last frame, the boss hands an employee a file, saying: "Your project is approved... unless scissors can't cut rock." The employee answers: "Assume it's sheet rock."

Wall Street is used to Mr Wang's antics but not swayed by them. Brian Goodstadt, an analyst at Standard & Poor, said: "He is known for his nonsense approach. And he is a sly manager." The 53-year-old son of Chinese immigrants is a self-made billionaire. He gets a base salary of \$1 million (£620,000) and last year received a \$12 million bonus, \$7 million of that in stock. He owns 5 per cent of Computer Associates, which he built into America's third-biggest software house over 22 years.

Mr Wang bought out his Swiss partners in 1980 and took the company public in 1981. Rapid growth was fuelled by acquisitions but, unlike the Computer Sciences bid, they were usually agreed offers for smaller companies.

OLIVER AUGUST
In New York

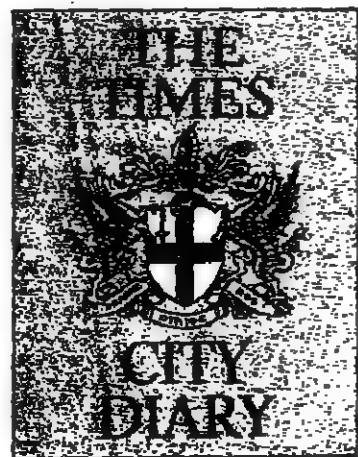
Gordon frown

IT IS a fact that in hush-dovey new Labour territory no one ever quarrels and there are no inter-departmental rivalries or petty politicking. So can anyone explain to me why, on the day that the Government finally confirmed what we have all known since the start of the year, that Eddie George will be the next Governor of the Bank of England, Gordon Brown failed even once to mention the fact at a formal press conference?

He was speaking about a high-level Group of Seven meeting in

London this weekend at which he will lead the British team along with Eddie George. Plus, there was talk about Bank help to troubled Asian economies. Either of these would have offered the opportunity to slip George's re-appointment into the conversation — but he didn't. I mull over the possibilities. Was it a) his spin doctors had leaked the fact to selected representatives of the press so often over the past few weeks that he forgot they had not officially been told? No, too cynical. Was it b) he simply forgot? Too disorganised. Was it c) the governorship of the Bank is a matter for Number 10 alone, and not up to the Chancellor? Too bureaucratic. Which leaves d), he can't stand Eddie George and, after a few weeks of shilly-shallying over his re-appointment to make the Governor look small — the equivalent of keeping a subordinate in your outer office for half an hour while you go through your internal mail — he still couldn't bring himself to mention the man's name? I only ask.

□ A SURVEY of brand awareness in Ireland produced some peculiar results. Top of the pops came Allied Irish Banks, followed by Bank of Ireland, which is fair enough. I suppose Guinness came a poor third. So much for pure genius. Perhaps they



should rename the stuff Diogen. No, stop, it was a joke, it was a joke.

Fraher ruck

DON'T you just dream of this sort of thing happening? Tony Fraher, chief executive of Singer & Friedlander Investment Funds, was at the University of Dublin's Faculty of Law last week speaking at the Fifth Annual Funds Conference. Lots of worthy stuff on regulation and the future of Dublin as a financial centre, but the occasion had a certain added piquancy for Fraher. He trained as an accountant, after the same University of Dublin law faculty declined the opportunity to instruct him in the law. As he pointed out to his hosts: "I'm

delighted to be invited back to such an august institution — 30 years after you told me to be off."

□ SHORTLY before it threatens to impact sharply with my front fender, my attention is drawn to an advertisement on the back of a London bus. It is for The Verve, and is done in full swirl Paisley psychedelic style, like something left over from a Cream album circa 1968. This is clearly a reference to the terribly fashionable if somewhat retrograde 1960s-style pop group The Verve, described by my young colleague as "the album sisters bought their brothers this Christmas", whatever that may mean.

I study the ad more closely. It is for the new model Peugeot 306. "It's pure coincidence — conceived before the pop group came to the fore. There's no conscious connection at all," says the man from Peugeot. Pure luck, therefore. Renault put out an Oasis model a while back, alas a little too early for the publicity to have been truly effective. And VW are using The Beatles to sell their new look Beetle, I recall. Which suggests that before long we might all be driving around in saloons named The Grateful Dead. Or, on second thoughts, perhaps not.

Tax for tubbies

REMEMBER Hector, the cartoon tax man who failed to persuade al-

most a million people to fill in their tax forms on time? The Chartered Institute of Taxation, which represents tax professionals, claims Hector's self-assessment campaign has brought in its train an unexpected spin-off, creating a new cult figure on the nation's campuses, raising the profession's profile and so persuading a new generation of students to consider a career in tax.

Just one hideous doubt for the accountants. Is this the same generation of students who lie around stupefied with drugs convinced there is a meaningful secret message buried within the Teletubbies?

MARTIN WALLER



Could the Teletubbies generation turn to tax?



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Provision for dispute holds back Mersey's profit rise

By GEORGE SIVELL

PROFITS growth of Mersey Docks was held back by a £10 million provision to cover the cost of settling, in January, a 28-month dispute with former dock workers.

Pre-tax profits announced yesterday rose from £29.6 million to £34.6 million on sales up from £149.6 million to £168.5 million in the year to December 31. Earnings per share rose from 22.7p to 27.35p, and the total dividend rises from 12.75p to 14.5p. The final is up from 8.75p to 10p.

Profits in 1996 were held back by a £9.1 million charge for the termination of the Eurolink operation. Sales included, for the first time, a full-year contribution from BG Freight Line, which performed "satisfactorily".

Gordon Waddell, chairman, said: "The financial position of the group, with its strong cash flow, remains sound and enables it to finance the substantial capital expenditure programme... which will, over time, produce further growth."

Mersey Docks said that record volumes of cargo were handled at Liverpool and by Mersey Ports. At Liverpool, 30.8 million tonnes of cargo were handled, up from 30.7 million in 1996, including 460,000 container units, up from 414,000 in 1996. Mersey handled 2.6 million tonnes of cargo, up from 2.3 million tonnes in 1996. The number of cars handled increased to 414,000, from 376,000 in 1996.

Capital expenditure in 1997 was £36 million, less than expected because of delays in big projects. As a result, spending will rise to £65 million in the current year.

At Liverpool, work has begun on expanding the port and reefer area, including constructing the first phase of 860,000 sq ft of warehousing on a 70-acre site. The first unit on the £20 million site has been let and Mersey Docks expects pre-letting of other units due for completion in 1998.

Medway has begun constructing a £35 million fresh-produce deep-water berth and distribution facility.

Tempus, page 28



A demonstration outside the Mersey Docks headquarters during the industrial dispute that affected results announced by the company yesterday

Lonrho to break up Princess Hotels chain to ease sale

By JASON NISSE

Lonrho, which is in the process of demerging its African trading businesses, is to break up its Princess Hotels chain into two parts to make it easier to sell. The move follows the collapse of talks between the conglomerate, based in London, and Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the Saudi investor, over a £300 million sale shortly before Christmas.

The group has asked Jones Lang Wobton, the surveyor, to sell its two hotels and casino in the Bahamas separately from its seven other properties, spread across the US, Mexico and the Caribbean, and are being marketed by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Lonrho's merchant bankers.

John Price, president of Princess, said the decision to split the businesses was made because some investors were more interested in its gambling operations than others.

The split also raised speculation that the gambling element at the Bahamas hotels was one of the reasons behind the failure to complete the original deal with Prince Alwaleed. Strong interest in the Princess chain has been expressed by a number of investors including Hilton Hotels Corporation, the US group which in partnership with Ladbroke, Marriott International and Starwood Lodging, City analysts now expect Lonrho to

receive at least £400 million from the sell-off.

Progress on Princess would be welcomed by investors in Lonrho, who have become concerned at the lack of progress in its talks with JCI, the troubled South African mining conglomerate.

Lonrho is bidding to conclude two deals with JCI. The first is a complex three-way swap with Anglo American, the South African conglomerate, which would see Lonrho

buy back a 26 per cent stake in the group for £200 million. The second is a purchase of JCI's Tavistock coal mining business through Duiker, 61 per cent owned by Lonrho.

Talks with JCI are close to collapse, partially because of the break-up of JCI, and partially because of JCI's insistence on linking the Anglo and Tavistock deals.

Lonrho is also pressing ahead with its plans to demerge its African trading businesses, due to be floated next month with a market value of about £200 million.

HSBC James Capel, the broker, yesterday published a research note in which it said Lonrho Africa was a unique investment and offered "strong growth with measured risk". However, some investors have been wary of the business because of its exposure to potentially unstable African governments.

Should Lonrho succeed in completing all three deals this year, Nick Morrell, chief executive, would be in line for a bonus of about £250,000.

Swansea goal is £75m stadium

By AGNES BELL

SILVER SHIELD, the engineering group that owns the Swansea City football club, has received a warm response from the local authority for a proposed £75 million "Swansea Stadium Park".

Silver Shield bought an 80 per cent stake in Swansea, which plays in the Nationwide third division, last August. It

plans to replace the existing Vetch Field stadium with a 25,000 all-seater venue, which it claims will be on a par with Sunderland's Stadium of Light.

The 75-acre site will cost £20 million to buy and £55 million to develop. It is to be financed through commercial development, Football League grants,

sponsorship and money from the local authority.

Only a mile from Swansea city centre, the Swansea Stadium Park will include a family entertainment centre, a multiplex cinema, an ice rink, a fitness centre, an hotel, restaurants and a food superstore. A detailed planning application will be made in the next

three months. The scheme is expected to create about 750 jobs.

Neil McClure, Silver Shield's chairman, is also negotiating with the Rugby League authorities for a Super League franchise and has had preliminary discussions with other national and local sporting organisations.

French offer GAN in May trade sale

FRANCE'S Socialist-led Government launched the privatisation of 82.1 per cent of insurer GAN. The finance ministry said the sell-off would be made by trade sale with a deadline for bids of May 7. The European Commission, however, said it could not comment on whether the privatisation terms were in line with conditions imposed last year in return for clearance of huge rescue aid for the French insurer.

The Commission said: "We received the sale terms on Tuesday which we are analysing." In July 1997, the Commission, acting as the European Union's competition watchdog, authorised the injection of £23.7 billion (£23.7 billion) by the French Government into the GAN group, which includes regional bank CIC and debt-laden property lending unit UIC, in return for its sale.

Cammell for Gibraltar

CAMELL LAIRD, the shipbuilding group that recently floated on the stock market, yesterday concluded its deal to operate the Gibraltar Shipyard. The principal provisions of the deal are that Cammell will lease the whole of the existing shipyard from the Government of Gibraltar for 20 years with an option to extend for a further 20 years. The annual rental of £250,000 is payable from the fourth year. The shipyard is planned to re-open shortly.

Wellington advances

WELLINGTON Underwriting Agencies said its syndicates made £12.3 million for the latest Lloyd's of London year off account. Wellington revealed the figure for the 1995 year represented a return on capacity of 15.3 per cent and reflected the continued improvement seen on the previous quarter. It added that the three syndicates trading in 1996, together produced profits of £100.9 million on capacity of £507.8 million, equivalent to a return on capacity of 19.9 per cent.

Photobition acquisition

PHOTOBITION is to buy Jigsaw Freight and Jigsaw Pieces for £1.6 million from their existing management. Photobition said the two businesses will complement the film storage and distribution activities of the Novo group, which Photobition acquired for £28 million in November. In the year ended December 31, 1997, the businesses being acquired produced operating profits of £323,000 on sales of £2.8 million. As at December 31, they had net assets of £270,000.

Usinor's income grows

USINOR, the privatised French steel maker, unveiled a 38 per cent rise in net income to Fr 2,055 million (£205 million) for 1997. Usinor said European economic conditions should sustain growth until the summer, however, flat stainless steel, which makes up 17 per cent of group sales, would continue to suffer from global overcapacity. A spokesman said: "The order books are well filled and plants should operate at full capacity over the first six months of 1998."

Dunloe raises Ewart bid

DUNLOE HOUSE, the property group, has raised its bid for Ewart from £21.1 million to £24.4 million by increasing the cash offer to 75p a share from 67p. The share offer has been kept at 18 new Dunloe shares for each five Ewart shares although the loan note alternative has been increased to 78p from 70p. Philip Byrne, managing director of Dunloe, said: "Our revised offer for Ewart is final." Ewart has rejected Dunloe's approach.

ACCOUNTANCY

Silence carries its share of risks

Robert Hodgkinson on the debate about one aspect of reporting

In 1992 unexpected corporate collapses spurred the Cadbury committee to say that listed companies should report annually on the effectiveness of their internal controls. Ever since, accountants have been arguing about how to respond. Last month the final report of Cadbury's successor, the Hampel committee, seemed to bring the debate to a conclusion, but that is doubtful.

The limited value to investors of most current reporting on controls makes change inevitable, although it would be a shame if it took another wave of failures to force it. How things may develop is set out in *Financial Reporting of Risk - Proposals for a Statement of Business Risk*, a discussion paper published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).

Currently directors recite their responsibility for internal financial controls, which provide reasonable but not absolute assurance against material losses or errors in the accounts. They describe the key controls that they have put in place and confirm that they have reviewed their effectiveness. Some commentators were outraged that Hampel backed off requiring directors to report the conclusions of their review. However, accountants and directors have found effectiveness too elusive to define and Hampel said they should stop trying.

Less accommodating is

Hampel's insistence that directors are responsible for more than financial controls. Controls over operations and compliance with laws and regulations are relevant, as is risk management generally. However, without a fresh initiative, this broader perspective is unlikely to lead to significant changes in reporting. The reason is that most companies do not disclose specific risks and controls. They opt for generalities about organisational, budgeting and other procedures that provide little information about an individual company.

By contrast, the ICAEW paper picks up Hampel's all-inclusive approach to risk management and proposes that quoted companies make hard-edged new disclosures. A statement of business risk would highlight sources of uncertainty and volatility with most impact on financial performance. For these key risks, companies would describe the actions that they take and the measures used to manage them. This open reporting of risks, actions and measures would breathe life back into Cadbury's original recommendation.

Key risks reported in the statement might lie in the supply of raw materials, product development, regulation, information technology, staff retention or customer satisfaction. Directors would describe not only controls, but also strategic actions such as re-



Robert Hodgkinson says companies must take risks to prosper

ruitment and training, outsourcing and joint ventures, insurance and contingency planning, or simple withdrawal from an area in which the company lacks the competence necessary to manage risk.

The ICAEW approach would offer a positive justification for not reporting on effectiveness. Users of annual reports should form their own views based on the directors' actions and the accounting and non-accounting measures that the directors use to manage key risks. In-

create shareholder value. Companies only prosper if they take risks and have the expertise to do so successfully. Controls, enshrined in procedures manuals, the segregation of duties, authorisation limits and double checking are necessary, but of secondary importance.

Reservations about the proposals are likely to focus on commercial sensitivity. It is clear that any public disclosure may have harmful commercial consequences for companies that buy and sell in competitive markets. The issue is whether non-disclosure of risk does more damage, particularly if it increases uncertainty and the cost of capital, thus reducing shareholder value. Ultimately, companies have to do what is in their overall interests.

The discussion paper also takes care to address directors' proper concerns that new risk disclosures will increase their legal exposure. In fact, directors face most danger when they are raising funds and are already required by the Stock Exchange to make disclosures about risk. At other times, it is difficult to see how it can be more dangerous to make a statement that seeks to convey useful and balanced information about risk than to say nothing useful about it at all.

Copies of the paper are available from Jacquie Parkins at the ICAEW on 0171-920 8623 and comments are invited by April 30.

Robert Hodgkinson is a partner in Arthur Andersen's UK Professional Standards Group and chairs the ICAEW's Financial Reporting Committee.

More bottom line than official line

LATE last Friday afternoon one partner at KPMG summed up the whole feeling within the firm. "We've got a lot of smiling partners around here and a lot of smiling clients," he said. "They are saying 'You've got a great business. Why spoil it?'" He was speaking minutes before the official announcement that the attempt to merge with Ernst & Young to create the world's biggest accountancy firm was off.

The rumours had started earlier in the day that Ernst & Young, after their marathon international executive committee meeting in Grand Cayman, had decided to pull out of the merger. And sure enough, Colin Sharman, the KPMG chairman, received the fateful phone call on Friday morning. Immediately the post-mortems started. The official line was that the regulators were to blame. But there were many other reasons just beneath the surface.

Colin Sharman was saying that evening that "we were overwhelmed by the regulatory process". But if anyone was overwhelmed by the regulators it was the Americans. They had taken the partner votes in mid-December. They took the view, as one partner here said, that "we did it at Christmas". And after that they couldn't understand why the regulatory process did not consist of strong words followed by simple approval. Instead, they found regulatory authorities all around the world converging in their efforts. Even the American Justice Department appeared, in the American view, to be in cahoots with the European competition authorities. And not only were they working steadily together but they were also doing imperceptible things for detailed profitability figures and suggesting that the deadline for disclosure was the following Tuesday. The Americans suddenly had cold feet. But behind this background another area of opposition was swelling.

Clients in the UK were always furious about the idea. One non-executive director, who had spent much of his career in the accountancy profession and was now a client of both firms, described the documentation he had received from Ernst & Young and KPMG as "a load of crap". Initially it was felt that all this client unrest could be contained. Persuasion would bring them round. But if it didn't happen, a week before the merger was pulled the other two firms' attempting a

merger, Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, held a meeting with the 100 Group of Finance Directors. It was a quietly hostile meeting. But after the two senior partners departed fury broke out. The question of "how dare they treat us like this" was the mildest of the views expressed. But the longer the regulatory impasse went on the more the client revolt spread. "It was no longer just a UK issue," said Ernst & Young's senior partner, Nick Land. "The mood was spreading around the world."

And then of course there were the cultural issues. KPMG was seen as being more fragmented in international structure. Ernst & Young was seen as stronger internationally. People at KPMG were impressed with the profitability of Ernst & Young's tax empire but less than impressed with the reputation. The remuneration structures of the two firms niggled and seemed unbridgeable. As one Ernst & Young partner put it: "Most of us are in the £200,000 to £300,000 category. At KPMG the disparity is much, much greater."

Technology was an issue. The technologies being used by the two firms were totally different. "It was going to be twice as hard to reconcile them now that technology has taken such a hold," said one partner. There were different approaches to consulting. And the spectacle of the wheels coming off the Arthur Andersen empire in the meantime showed the inherent structural dangers in going for sheer size and concentrated many people's minds. All these issues started rolling round in the maelstrom of the thoughts of partners as they jetted exhaustively around the world. And in the end it all came down to one basic principle which all accountants understand.

Ernst & Young's culture is to protect the bottom line. As one observer put it the thinking was: "It's costing us a fortune. We should have known better than this. The clients don't like it and there is probably a recession coming. It's too embarrassing to say 'we just cocked up the numbers', so we'll blame the regulators." The merger was pulled. There are problems ahead. The firms will still need to raise capital for huge future investment. But for Ernst & Young and KPMG the smiles all round suggest that they know that they have done the right thing, however convoluted a route they may have taken.

It remains to be seen how Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand will fare. They will certainly feel lonelier in the months ahead.



ROBERT BRUCE

Dry run gives rise to concern

THE senior partners of the Big Six firms have been worried about Colin Sharman for some time. Not because of the KPMG chairman's efforts to create the biggest firm in the world by merging with Ernst & Young. But because the ebullient Sharman has been on the wagon. Ian Brindle, Price Waterhouse senior partner, has been particularly vociferous, telling Sharman to "get a

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The big picture

WITH mergers off the agenda, Ernst & Young staff and clients can breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy the pictures. Last week the firm launched its latest Tate Gallery sponsorships. After triumphs supporting Picasso and Cezanne exhibitions they look to have done it again with the first big show of Bonnard in the past 20 years. Even non-clients

are joining in. The imaginative sandwich chain, Pret a Manger, has launched a new line - the "Bunnard".

Taxing time

THE influential Tax Law Review Committee is on the rampage. In the past it has supported Inland Revenue and Department of Social Security efforts to achieve greater convergence of tax and national in-

surance (NI) contributions processes. It even advocated that NI contributions disputes should be run through the framework for income tax appeals. But the Social Security Bill wending its way through Parliament jumps such disputes in with benefits appeals. This could create all manner of conflicting rulings. Good news for lawyers, but the committee is furious. Expect a noisy debate in the House of Lords next Monday.

ROBERT BRUCE

BT contests C&WC claims of 35,000 defectors a month

By ADAM JONES

CABLE AND WIRELESS Communications (C&WC) claims to be taking between 30,000 and 35,000 residential telephone customers a month away from BT after a recent £50 million advertising blitz.

BT insists it is only losing 35,000 a month to all the cable operators combined. Both operators said their figures take "churning" — short-lived changes in customer allegiance — into account.

Graham Wallace, chief executive of C&WC, said the cable TV and telecoms group has 1.3 million residential customers using the direct cable telephone services. The number of BT defectors before the publicity campaign started in mid-September was about 20,000 a month, he added.

The campaign involved C&WC canvassing potential customers about what they wanted from a telecoms provider. It now has about 900,000 cable television customers, most of whom also have a telephone line.

Mr Wallace was speaking as C&WC announced a £400 million rebuild of its national telephone network, aimed at increasing its ability to handle the data-transfer needs of business users.

It said the investment will multiply the capacity of some fibre-optic links by a factor of 24, allowing quicker and more reliable transfer and laying the foundations for Internet, telephone services and digital television services for residen-



Graham Wallace, of C&WC, announced a £400 million rebuild of its network to cope with business demand

tial users. Mr Wallace said the demand for high-capacity data transfer is booming to the extent that C&WC has had to turn away customers.

The work, carried out in partnership with Nortel, the US telecoms company, will not involve any digging-up of pavements. A spokesman

said: "It's effectively about putting a new box at each end of the pipe."

C&WC said the £400 million investment, which is part of the £1 billion capital expenditure budget already outlined for the next three years, will enable it to reduce the number of engineers it has to recruit.

Many of the functions engi-

neers carry out at offices, such as altering the telephone line capacity, can be done remotely through the network, it said. C&WC is looking to reduce the ratio of operating costs to revenue from 24 per cent to 18 per cent.

C&WC is yet to reveal whether Microsoft or its rival Oracle will provide the soft-

ware for the boxes that will eventually sit on top of televisions and allow a dual digital TV and personal computer-emulation service.

Mr Wallace said a decision has been made and an announcement is likely within the next few weeks. C&WC will launch its digital TV service this year.

Clever cards that could tighten the net on fraudsters

Chris Ayres
on the smart
technology
working to
deter credit
criminals

The problem of how to improve credit card security while developing a reliable electronic payments system for the Internet has attracted heated debate this week.

On Tuesday, Europay, the payments system backed by most major European banks, claimed to have developed a "smart card" that would revolutionise credit card security.

Europay said that the cards, when used with the right equipment — installed in anything from a PC to a mobile phone — would allow consumers to shop on the Internet without worry of fraud. The cards would also improve security for conventional transactions, the organisation claimed.

Not all are satisfied. Kevin Murray, a US politician, has raised fears over the technology. Last Friday, he introduced a Bill in California to prevent theft and misuse of the kind of information that could be stored on smart cards — such as fingerprints or medical records.

The issues surrounding smart cards would probably be even more controversial if they were easier to understand. Basically, the problem is that 25-year-old magnetic strip technology in credit cards makes it relatively easy for criminals to trick machines into accepting stolen or invalid cards.

It is even easier for signatures to be forged, or for goods to be ordered over the telephone. This kind of fraud cost banks and building societies an estimated £97 million last year, a bill that is passed on to consumers through higher bank charges.

Banks have tolerated credit card fraud for years, partly because of the enormous cost of introducing more secure technology. However, now that electronic commerce is set for rapid growth, they have little choice but to take preventative measures. Smart cards are different to traditional cards because they have "intelligent" microprocessors inside them. This gives them room to store vast amounts of information

about their holders; rather than just a pin number, they can carry medical records, CV, driving licence and shoe size.

Europay says criminals would soon realise that they were wasting their time trying to hack into smart cards to use them fraudulently. However, the company is vague and defensive when asked to explain exactly how the smart cards work.

It is still not clear if smart

cards will be public opinion. When technology such as biometrics — which allows computers to recognise your face by its unique thermal image, stored on a smart card — become common, consumers could have their entire identities stolen and used fraudulently.

And this is where Mr Murray steps in with his Californian Bill. It may sound like science fiction, but until consumers are convinced otherwise, they are likely to stick with their magnetic strips.

United News and Media, the owner of The Express, this week launched a stripped-down financial information service on the Internet to rival Reuters. The company, headed by Lord Hollick, says the online service will fill a market niche.

The service, run by Money and Bonds — a United subsidiary — is aimed at small and medium-sized businesses that need constant access to up-to-date financial information. United is particularly targeting exporters that need foreign exchange information but cannot justify subscribing to a full-blown service such as Reuters.

Businesses will be charged £50 per month for the service after a free trial period. However, United is likely to face intense competition from rival media groups, many of which already provide market information free on the Internet.

Lots of businesses fell out of love with the Internet on Valentine's Day. The rapidly growing demand for electronic greetings cards — sold by companies such as Hallmark and Greet Street — resulted in serious congestion on the Internet for several hours at the weekend.

It is estimated that several million saccharine online greetings passed through the Internet's arteries — many at the last minute — complete with attached pictures and animation. This resulted in e-mails being delayed and Internet sites taking several minutes to load.



Government takes its cue from bankers' recommendations

Singapore promises reform package

By GEORGE SIVELL

SINGAPORE yesterday promised to liberalise its banking and finance industry in a move that alleviated some of the gloom hanging over South-East Asian markets.

The Straits Times Industrial Index rose by almost 2 per cent after the Government promise. The index gained 42.08 points to close at 1,538.98, driven higher by

buying of bank stocks and a government promise that companies would be able to buy back their own shares.

Lee Hsien Loong, Deputy Prime Minister, said that the Government would promote a debt market and fund management in Singapore by simplifying rules and placing a greater proportion of public funds with private institutions.

Mr Lee, who is head of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the central bank, said that the Government accepted almost all the ideas suggested by a committee of bankers to make Singapore's financial market more vibrant.

Analysis said that the development of a local bond market could bring a greater regional role for the Singapore dollar, particularly if the Government also removed restrictions on company borrowing of the local currency

and set up Singapore dollar interest-rate contracts.

Mr Lee said that the Government would not abolish estate duties or stamp duties on share deals, as the committee proposed, but would study its other tax ideas. He said the Government wanted to improve the financial sector within the existing structure. "You can't liberalise overnight, but we can do it over time," he said. Asked whether the reforms

would give Singapore the "buzz" that its rival Hong Kong is often said to have, Mr Lee said: "We will have a series of things and cumulatively, gradually, you might notice a hum."

The Government accepted the bankers' suggestion that it issue longer-term government debt, but rejected letting some money in the state-run compulsory savings scheme be managed by private funds.

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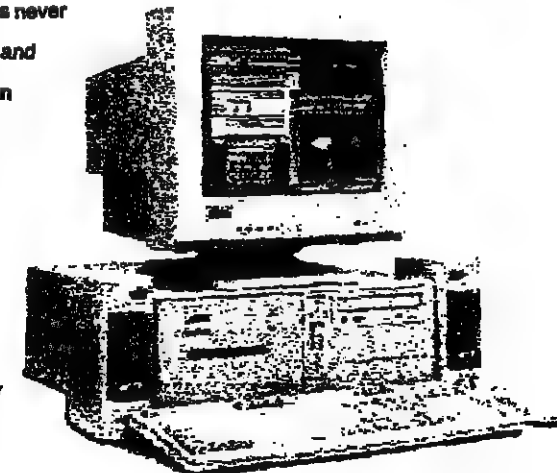
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THE BUTCHER BOY

15

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CINEMA DETAILS CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

The Butcher Boy marks a return to intimacy for director Neil Jordan. Sheila Johnston reports.

Dragons on the sidelines

Vampires, ghosts and werewolves stalk Neil Jordan's work. Gangsters fall in love with lesbians. IRA hit-men pine for transvestites and teenage boys explore the Oedipus complex with their mothers. His mysterious, tormented creatures inhabit the fringes of the familiar world. Like medieval maps, his films ought to bear the warning, "Here be dragons".

The demon in his adaptation of Patrick McCabe's Booker Prize short-listed novel, *The Butcher Boy*, is Frankie Brady, a pugnacious little redhead growing up in Ireland in the early Sixties. Among the adversaries he faces are a drunken father, a mentally deranged mother, a smug neighbour and a worldly Virgin Mary, played, in a bizarre touch, by Sinéad O'Connor. "People might be shocked. They can if they want to be," the director comments blithely.

The Butcher Boy (see review, facing page) starts as an apparently conventional coming-of-age drama, but Frankie's bleak vision never matures and mellow into enlightenment. Arson, murder and madness end up on the agenda. It adds up to an eerie and macabre black comedy unlike anything Jordan has made before.

"A lot of people are quite upset by that character. He's not somebody who is fighting the good fight, is he?" says the director. For all the brooding melancholy of his movies Jordan cuts a rumpled, unfathomably amused figure who appears to view the world in general and interviews in particular with deadpan irony. "But that's the kind of thing that interests me."

Jordan was born in 1951, which would make him an exact contemporary of McCabe's young anthero. And he vividly remembers the Ireland portrayed in the book, a curious mix of mysticism, Cold War paranoia and straitened parochialism. "We used to pray every day to save the world from communism. And Kennedy was a big Irish hero. When I went to London for the first time — I must have been about 18 — I felt I was coming from the Third World. Ireland has changed so totally since the early Sixties that it's almost a different country."

There, he would like to point out, the resemblances end. Frankie was kicking his heels

in a one-horse town on the North/South Irish border, while Jordan was growing up in Dublin. "My mother was a painter and my father was a teacher. I suppose the household was a little bit odd, a little bohemian." And whereas Frankie wallows in junk culture, Jordan's trips to the movies were rationed to once a fortnight and comic books were strictly verboten.

"The parents of my generation came out of small impoverished rural backgrounds and improved themselves through education. And then I suppose I came along with no apparent desire to improve myself in any way whatsoever. I was slipping back to the mire from which they came. My father was a hugely intelligent man — he used to study mathematics. I think he was probably scared of madness. Afraid of the untrammelled use of your brain and your imagination. So when I began writing, it disturbed him."

"My stuff was quite black, quite despairing. And at the time writers didn't have very good lives in Ireland — you either had to go away or you became an alcoholic. I went to London and took casual labouring jobs. I was to all intents and purposes unemployable."

After burning around in this way for several years, Jordan was vindicated when his collection of short stories, *Night in Tunisia*, won the *Guardian* Fiction Prize in 1979. And he kept writing: the complex relationship with his father, whose sudden death in 1984 precipitated a self-confessed crisis, later inspired another acclaimed novel, *Sunrise with Sea Monster*.

And, perhaps more unusually in a movie industry which has waxed and waned wildly since he made his first film, *Angel*, in 1982, he has enjoyed a remarkably sustained career, with high-profile successes such as *Mona Lisa*, *The Company of Wolves* and *The Crying Game* to his credit. *The Butcher Boy* is his tenth movie. An eleven, as yet untitled, psychological thriller — "a bit like *Requiem for a Dream* or *Don't Look Now* — starring Annette Bening and Robert Downey Jr. is already completed, and a script for a twelfth, an adaptation of Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*, awaits a green light from Columbia Studio. There has been the odd clunker — notably *High Spirits*

"I write myself and so I don't have to find a script"



Irish film-maker Neil Jordan: "People might be shocked. They can if they want to be"

'Return to sender'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

SNAP VERDICT

■ **THE POSTMAN**
Damian: 20. This film just didn't deliver. A definite contender for worst film of the year.
Leslie: 19. A tedious, slow-motion, what a dud movie.

■ **THE BUTCHER BOY**
Damian: 20. A real knock-out. Daniel Day-Lewis is both physically and emotionally powerful in this gripping movie.

■ **THE BOXER**
Damian: A real knock-out. Daniel Day-Lewis is both physically and emotionally powerful in this gripping movie.

Leslie: Emily Watson stakes her claim as one of our finest young actresses.
Laura: I was out for the count! What a wicked film.
Eleanor: It gave me a real insight into the problems facing those in Northern Ireland. Highly recommended.

■ **THE BUTCHER BOY**
Damian: One minute formless, the next minute weird. A waste of celluloid.
Leslie: An unsuccessful film that makes little use of the talent of Fiona Shaw.
Laura: An odd little movie that simply does not work.
Eleanor: Sinéad O'Connor's vision as the Virgin Mary...

NEW ON VIDEO

Up on the roof

■ **L'APPARTEMENT**
(Artificial Eye, 15, 1996)
AN EBULLIENT French diversion from a new and promising director, Gilles Mimouni. Lovelorn twenty-somethings tie themselves in knots in a romantic Paris of rooftop apartments, staircases, streets and cafes, all lovingly crafted in a studio. Time slips between the present and past as Vincent Cassel's Max, on the verge of marriage, attempts to locate a lost girlfriend. Mimouni plays with narrative's building blocks, but his games never squeeze out human feeling; and the cast makes us share the yearning and torment. Available to rent or buy.

■ **CAREER GIRLS**
(Film Four, 15, 1996)
COMING after *Secrets & Lies*, Mike Leigh's latest may appear rather slight. But this wayward tale of two college friends, Katrin Cartlidge and Lynda Steadman meeting up in London after six years develops into a deeply affecting exploration of friendship, fond hopes and harsh reality. Scenes cut between the past and present, allowing us to see how time has mellowed Cartlidge's prickly misfit and Steadman's wallflower. College scenes in particular suffer from the director's old vice of extreme social caricature; but Leigh's observations soon deepen, and after many funny and melancholy moments you want the best for these career girls. A rental release.

■ **THE CHAMBER**
(CIC, 15, 1997)
ANOTHER product of the John Grisham factory, though an unusual one, for instead of extravagant plots and courtroom stunts, we get suitably a chamber piece. It's a strikingly

gloomy affair that invites unwarranted sympathy for Gene Hackman's racist, awaiting execution on Death Row for killing two black children. Chris O'Donnell is his lawyer (and his grandson), who tries to win a reprieve, although it's hard to cheer him on. Unusually sober direction from James Foley adds to the film's lowering effect. Available to rent.

■ **CONSPIRACY THEORY**
(Warner, 15, 1997)
MEL GIBSON'S New York cabbie babbles on about conspiracies to Julia Roberts's Justice Department attorney. She eventually takes him seriously, which is more than we do in this whopping piece of Hollywood nonsense. The two players never work as a team: Gibson lays on the wacky charm, but with Roberts, star or no, you stare into a void. Richard Donner directs in slam-bang fashion; Patrick Stewart wastes his time as an ambiguous government psychiatrist. A rental release.

■ **MA VIE SEXUELLE**
(Fox World Cinema, 15, 1996)
THREE hours spent with talkative young Paris intellectuals may not immediately take your fancy. But keep patient with this epic, and you'll find a youngish director Arnaud Desplechin sucks you into the glittering world of Paul Dedalus, philosophy lecturer, whose thesis and love life sprawl in chaos. A fresh leading player helps. Mathieu Amalric boasts tousled hair and an engaging smile, most helpful when unleashing daunting paragraphs of self-analysis. Bizarre comedy also keeps the film surprising. Available to rent.

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Costner dons his suit of mail again

NEW MOVIES: Geoff Brown sees the thinking man's Rambo return in the almost-successful *The Postman*

For a man who once danced with wolves, delivering letters may not seem too exciting a job. But there Kevin Costner stands, in blue cap and uniform, postbag slung round his shoulders, ready to bring news to the folks of Pineview, Oregon. He is *The Postman*. He is the film's star, its director, its guiding light. He guides it, too, in much the same way as *Dances with Wolves*.

Of course, Costner's postman is no ordinary postman. The year is 2013, when war has destroyed American democracy and high technology, reducing the country to primitive communities living in fear of a strutting dictator, one General Bethlehem (nicely pitched by Will Patton).

Conscripted into Bethlehem's army, Costner escapes, finds a postman's uniform and assumes the role for convenience. To Pineview, he brings a flicker of hope; he spins a yarn that a new President, Richard Starkey by name, is knitting the country together. Most people believe him and, while Bethlehem snarls, rapes and pillages, the postman finds himself a catalyst for change. "You are God-sent," one citizen enthuses. "No," Costner says in his best "aw shucks" manner, "I'm just the postman."

His modesty does not convince, for Costner the director keeps thrusting Costner the actor centre-stage, and plonking a halo on top. Passionate concerns for America's first principles, freedom and democracy, course through the film. Hot air and clumsy drama come with them; and it is impossible not to laugh at times as the opposing sides thrash out their beliefs, or the film's strong-willed love interest suddenly turns gooey.

Yet you still keep watching, curious and bemused, for almost three hours. Costner's direction keeps the saga sweeping onwards. Scenery and costumes attract the eye. And British actress Olivia Williams impresses as the spirited Abby, object of Costner's affections. For all its manifold faults, at least *The Postman* isn't junk mail.

Red hair. A mobile and mischievous face. Limbs

The Postman
Warner West End
15, 178 mins
Kevin Costner delivers an important message

The Butcher Boy
Warner West End
15, 108 mins
Scary tale of a budding sociopath

The Boxer
Empire, 15, 114 mins
Dramatic tale of love and boxing in Belfast

Prisoner of the Mountains
Curzon Mayfair,
15, 93 mins
Powerful drama about the Chechen conflict

All Over Me
National Film Theatre,
90 mins
Wonderfully fresh coming-of-age story

Rothschild's Violin
Barbican, 98 mins
More opera video than movie

lurching out unexpectedly. But the most striking aspects of *The Butcher Boy* lie inside his head. Francie Brady, the 12-year-old star of Patrick McCabe's novel, now conscientiously filmed by Neil Jordan (see interview, facing page), wanders the streets of his small Irish town in the early 1960s living out a fantasy built from American TV shows, fear of the atomic bomb and a slaughterhouse sense of humour. As the film proceeds, the boy's grip on reality weakens; he grows more and more violent, fit for reform school and, finally, asylums.

There are reasons. These fantasies are his defences against a hostile world and a collapsing family. Father is a drunkard. Mother is heading for a nervous breakdown. Love and support are nowhere. Then death steps in to make life even bleaker.

Even so, Jordan makes it hard to murmur "Dear, dear" over time. Francie's belliger-



Kevin Costner gets himself into another fine mess in *The Postman*, the futuristic tale of one man's fight for truth, justice and the American way

ence becomes positively frightening, especially as portrayed by Eamonn Owens, new to acting but not to face-mugging. As Francie roamed the streets, blasting out insults, I realised that I, too, if transferred back to childhood, would be among his victims. I would be Philip Nugent, shy, bullied, living in fear of this obnoxious kid.

Finding Francie and *The Butcher Boy* amusing, therefore, was not an easy task. Not that Jordan shapes the film as a riotous black comedy. He determinedly pursues the novel's horror, pathos and gallows humour with a style flexible enough to embrace comic-strip imagery and visions of the Virgin Mary. The first person narrative is retained, intermittently, in Francie's adult voice, excel-

lently supplied by Stephen Rea (also cast as Francie's sudden father). His sardonic comments provide a framework; otherwise, the film could crumble into episodic japes, mournful rages and frenzy.

A prickly viewing experience, then; and, as such, worth seeking out. But there still seems something excessive in the way the film hurries in tandem with its budding sociopath. If Jordan had trod just a little more gently, we might feel less battered and more humbled by a soul in torment. "You used to make me laugh," Emily Watson complains to Daniel Day-Lewis in *The Boxer*. But 14 years in jail for IRA activities seem to have snuffed out his sparkle: he is withdrawn, ill at ease in the outside world. Humour plays little part in this film from Jim

Sheridan and scriptwriter Terry George, makers of *In the Name of the Father*, although it desperately needs jokes to leaven the political drama and romantic melancholy.

This is a pity, for some careful thought went into the film's creation. The stresses and strains within today's IRA form an interesting background. Brian Cox, the pragmatic local boss, endeavours to strike a deal with the British; Gerard McSorley's hard man sticks with the bomb and the gun. Day-Lewis and Watson work hard at their parts as they rekindle old flames. Greater enthusiasm, however, is not possible. You long to be stirred as the lovers thread through divided Belfast, or Day-Lewis fights for peace at the non-sectarian community centre. Instead

you feel detached and wearied by the film's worthiness.

Prisoner of the Mountains, made in 1996, does a much better job of thrusting audiences into one of the world's hot spots. The plotline comes from a Tolstoy novel; the

background is the conflict in Chechnya. We follow the fortunes of two wounded Russian soldiers held hostage in a mountain village. Sergei Bodrov, the director, excels at direct, poignant observation, and he captures beautifully

the waiting the prisoners must do as an exchange deal is attempted.

Bodrov takes no sides. Everyone suffers, family ties are broken, lives disrupted, or at worst terminated. But humour is never banished. Oleg Menshikov gives a roguish wrinkle to his soldier, Sacha; and Sergei Bodrov Jr, the director's son, brings an unforced charm to the young recruit Vanya, who catches the eye of his captor's daughter. Truth, beauty, and power: this small spellbinder has it all.

A spell is cast, too, by *All Over Me*, a wonderfully fresh American coming-of-age story that gives the awkwardness and fears of the teen years full rein. The film, written and directed by two sisters, Alex and Sylvia Sichel, first came to town last year for the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival; but wider audiences should revel in its human insights, visual sheen, and the touching, unaffected performances, particularly by Alison Folland. She plays Claude, a chunky teenager just graduating from high school, still forming her sexual identity. Death casts a shadow; decisions are agonised over. Life, in this film, brings responsibilities; by itself, this distinguishes *All Over Me* from the superficial romps that flood the teen market.

Rothschild's *Violin* feels more like an opera video than a fully fledged movie. The middle chunk contains a stodgy rendition of a one-act opera by Benjamin Fleischmann, a student of Shostakovich who perished in the siege of Leningrad. But the film, directed by Edgardo Cozarinsky, only comes alive at the beginning and end, where the opera's background is explored in docu-drama style.

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Interview with the vampire

If our caring, compassionate rulers have their way, there will soon be only two blood sports. One will be the review, or at least the kind of wittily scathing review written by John Simon in *New York* magazine or Victor Lewis-Smith in the *Evening Standard*. But with even some upmarket editors giving less and less space to critics, and modern England becoming what a character in David Lodge's acute, amusing *Home Truths* calls "a culture of gossip", the other blood sport looks like being longer-lived. That is the interview, as practised by people called Tattle, Snipe or Lynn Barber.

The first play in the trilogy is penning for Birmingham Rep involved creative writing courses, and the third will be on some literary topic as well. The subject of *Home Truths*, which is the second play in the series, becomes clear as soon as Brian Protheroe's Adrian and his wife, Margot Leicester's Eleanor, settle down with the Sunday papers. Oh dear, beside all the stuff about royalty, Blair's love of *Ivanhoe* and Branson's regrettable trains, is a celebrity interview. It accuses the couple's screenwriter friend, Cliff Howells's Samuel, of being vain, brash, egotistic and wearing a toupee.

Thereupon Howells arrives in a Range Rover with the number plate SAM 1, exuding brash egotistic outrage from underneath the toupee. Lodge's play has some nice ironies and, as it turns out, a subtler plot than we are at first led to expect.

Samuel urges Adrian, a semi-retired novelist whose first and most famous novel still excites the A-level examiners, to take revenge on the interview by inviting her to interview him, recording the event, and then publishing his counter-interview with her. And, somewhat implausibly, she appears to fall for the trick. That brings Rachel Pickup's Fanny Tarrant, complete with elegant white suit and vowels apt self-consciously to blend

Home Truths

Basildon with LA, on to Fran Thompson's arresting if overwrought set: a country living-room backed by a craggy cave of congealed books. And her encounter with Adrian allows Lodge to continue asking questions about contemporary interviews. Do they usefully subvert the hype of the famous, pandor to envy and cruelty, destroy creative people's peace of mind, deliver them salutary knocks, or what?

This two-way conversation ends with them both returning from Adrian's scene and being interrupted by the returning Eleanor. Lodge the aspiring dramatist should probably write out the following 100 times: in good plays cars don't conveniently run out of petrol in order for wives to discover husbands in compromising postures. But what really matters is that he moves into the more serious part of *Home Truths* at a time and from an angle not conducive to depth. That fine emotional actress, Margot Leicester, is particularly shortchanged by revelations about love, abortion, failure and sacrifice that are too cursorily treated to matter as much as they could.

Myself, I also found the ending sentimental, but then I must confess that I did not dash with flowers to Kensington Palace on hearing of Diana, Princess of Wales's death. Others in the new caring, compassionate Britain may find that it serves Lodge's purpose, which is to put celebrity interviews into perspective. Certainly it does not spoil a play that is mostly sharp, intelligent, surprising and fun. We should look forward to the next part of Lodge's literary trilogy — *Weird Processor*, or whatever it's called — with real anticipation.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Brian Protheroe and Rachel Pickup in David Lodge's funny and thoughtful *Home Truths*

Particularly fine de siècle

Shelagh Stephenson's new play is one of the most imaginative tilts at millennial anxiety, that you're likely to see this side of the new century. It is inspired by a Joseph Wright painting circa 1768, which depicts an experiment to show that life, in this case a bird trapped in a bell jar, could not exist in a vacuum. Matthew Lloyd brings the oily candle-lit portrait to life in mid-experiment with the scientist, Dr Fenwick of Newcastle, surrounded by his family on a set that looks like a cross between the

An Experiment With An Air-Pump Manchester

London Dungeon and an antique planetarium.

Skeletons, stuffed birds and snakes dangle from the roof of the Royal Exchange. It is an extraordinary set by Julian McGowan for an extraordinary play that links the study of anatomy to the riots of the industrial revolution, the birth of Roger's thesaurus, and what Fenwick calls "the restless, irresistible advance of science" as social engineering to rescue the masses from ignorance. That's merely half of Stephenson's play. The other half, set around New Year's Eve 1999, finds the present occupants of Fenwick's house moving out so it can be turned into a corporate hotel. But it is not the Disney-fying of our heritage that is Stephenson's primary concern. It is the cutting up of bodies and the selective breeding of focuses that provide the chilling link between these brave new worlds.

"At 13 years of age other girls wanted to be Marc Bolan. I wanted to be God," says Dearbhla Molloy's genetic scientist, Ellen, in 1999. Her unease about taking up a lucrative commercial post and exploiting her knowledge of genetic fingerprinting is aggravated by David Horovitch's Tom, who thinks it could be another form of discrimination.

Horovitch, doubling as the visionary Fenwick, has no such qualms in 1799. "We want to storm into the next century, not daze into it," rails the wild-haired scientist. The outspoken humanist thrills his students, Roger and a visiting physician, Armstrong, but singularly fails to cut any mustard with his own wife and daughters.

It is the way Stephenson anchors her exhilarating ideas in these domestic squabbles

that makes her play a first-rate drama. Tom Smith plays the young Roger as the sort of pedantic repressed twit one always suspected him to be. The real experimenting is conducted by Tom Mannion's Armstrong, who is mesmerised by Fenwick's young hunch-backed servant Isobel (Pauline Lockhart), who effortlessly scene-steals with her cool, clinical way with words and her equally cool view of her disability.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

Room for one more in the Hall of fame?

Jeremy Kingston meets a young director treading in some famous footsteps



Edward Hall gets ready for his RSC debut at the Swan

The sensible strategy for keen young directors embarking on a career is to resist any impulse to introduce their skills to the world with yet another production of *Woyzeck*, sure to be the fifth that month, and look around for a play that no one has staged in living memory.

Some luck is needed, and good timing too, neither of which were much in evidence when Edward Hall staged Byron's *Cain* at the tag-end of the 1992 Chichester season. The press were invited to the third of only four performances, and by the time the notices appeared the play had closed. Even so, the short run was four performances longer than any previous production in this country.

Next week *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Hall's first production for the RSC, opens in the Swan at Stratford upon Avon. Since a family connection with the company will have to be mentioned eventually the revelation might as well come at once: he is the son of Sir Peter, who of course established the RSC in its present form and has gone on to run the National Theatre and now his own company in the West End.

While driving to Stratford to interview the younger Hall it occurs to me that sons of famous fathers are seldom thrilled to be asked straight away how they get on with their old man. So when we are settled in a spare room with healthy tea, I recall his production of *Cain*, where Samuel West's hero argued the theological toss with Alexis Denisof's Lucifer in a hollow of sand.

He is glad to talk about a production that had vanished so quickly. "When I came across the play I thought, here's an extraordinary piece of metaphysical drama. I didn't know why it had never been done and I hoped I could find out why Stanislavsky had chosen this, of all plays, to open the Moscow Arts Theatre after the October Revolution. I

cut it a lot because I wanted to do it in 90 minutes, like a Greek tragedy."

I bite back a remark about how strikingly he resembles pictures of his father thirty-something years ago: the sudden flashing smile, a similar appearance of easy affability. Not yet the moment to mention his Dad.

Young Hall was reading history at Leeds University when he realised he was spending so much time in its theatre that what he surely ought to be doing was trying to become an actor. Three years later in his diploma year at Mountview Theatre School he decided that what he really enjoyed doing was directing, so when Rod Williams, a friend from school, sent him his gripping play about three prisoners, *No Remission*, he directed it at the Edinburgh Festival. Here it was seen by Philip Hedley, who took him to work at Stratford East reading scripts, helping to cast and doing workshops with local sixth formers.

Next came the culture jump to Chichester, followed by two RSC jobs as assistant director, and last summer a Shakespeare of his own, a well-received modern-dress *Henry V* at the Watermill Theatre, Newbury.

Remembering a famous modern dress *Hamlet* that Hall senior directed, I observe, ponderously casual, that although many sons and daughters of actors follow their parents on to the stage I cannot think of a director's son or daughter becoming a direc-

tor. Not a muscle moves on his face, but I detect something like an inward sigh. Having a famous father can make life easier: more often than not it has made life more difficult: people challenge his motives.

"Yes, he did have an influence on me when I was growing up because I went to see a lot of theatre, and there were always actors, writers and people from that world in the house. But my parents split up when I was 13 and from that point I lived with my mother. I saw my father a lot but it's only since my early twenties that we've spent more time with each other."

When *2 Gent* has opened he goes back to the Watermill to direct *The Comedy of Errors*, and then revives his *Henry V* to play them in repertoire. He and Jill Fraser, the Watermill's artistic director, are putting together a company able to travel light and tour anywhere. "The actors will make all the music, do all the sound effects, and there'll be so little scenery it can go as excess baggage. For instance, the door in *Comedy of Errors* — all we need is a door knocker. An actor with a half-mask and a large door knocker will be the door. We build the set with people."

I ask how he thought of that. He grins. "When I want an idea I have a bath, and it just comes. By the time I go into rehearsal I'm very clean."

● *Two Gentlemen of Verona* opens on Tuesday at the Swan, Stratford (01783 245423)



ne finis

CHICHESTER

he faith

THE TIMES

MICHAEL BOYD'S production is largely unremarkable although, fortunately, as so often proves to be the case, the sparring between Beatrice and Benedick is amusingly done, and their cautious approaches to rapture become genuinely affecting.

Before addressing the performances of Siobhan Redmond and Alex Jennings, here is a warning to anyone planning a visit to this production. If you decide you would like to know what is happening at the rear of Tom Piper's insanely deep stage, do not sit at the end of any row. And the closer you sit to the front the less you will see.

The set is a plainish white box. The only side-wall visible to me contained two plainish entrances, although production photos hint at something different on the other side. There is certainly a panelled door at the rear, which may be one

Unfunny at any angle

Much Ado About Nothing Barbican

half of a pair, and at the very end of the play the lid of the box lifts up to reveal a dark blue sky. I might have understood the purpose of this if I had seen what happened when the back door opened. A sigh of pleasure came murmuring from centrally seated members of the audience. Perhaps Don John is being dragged back in chains. Or

the patron saint of Messina is extending a blessing. My guess is that Mount Etna is in full eruption. Does the ticket office advise customers that side seats have a restricted view? What do you think?

Fireworks from Etna would not be out of keeping with some of Boyd's unwise attempts to thrust his own sense of comedy into the play. For Benedick to climb a tree to overhear himself discussed is reasonable, but he is made to fall out of it, hide beneath a table and shuffle the table around the stage, jerking at each fresh nugget of news. The members of the Watch approach the conspirators by pretending to be portraits in empty picture frames. It's mirthless.

However, there is genuine comedy accompanying the wit in Jennings's effervescent rage, and he displays a fine dignity when rejecting his former companions. Redmond finds insufficient passion for her quiet "Kill Claudio," contrasting with Jennings's emphasis on the final word of "Think you in your soul?", which does seem to spring truly from the heart. They are a likeable pair, even if Boyd inevitably coarsens their final embrace. But then, this is a production that goes in for the supposedly comic overkill.

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MIRAMAX CHANGING TIMES

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Sarah Bradford on co-authors in search of a foul conspiracy

Within hours of the accident in the underpass beneath the Place de l'Alma in Paris that resulted in the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the site of the golden torch in the place above had been converted into a shrine. As the pile of flowers, teddy bears and heartbroken messages mounted, so did the conspiracy theories. For those of us old enough to remember the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the situation was all too familiar: the search for scapegoats, wild speculation, rumours of shadowy, powerful figures in the background.

Sancton and MacLeod, Paris-based reporters for *Time* magazine, have put together an account of the facts and fantasies available at present. Thwarted by tight-lipped French doctors, policemen and investigating magistrates, they found a voluble and welcoming source in Mohamed Al Fayed and his family and swallowed their line — pregnancy rumours, an engagement et al — hook, line and sinker.

It would be charitable to say that Al Fayed finds it difficult to accept that the deaths of his son and the Princess could have been the tragic consequence of a game of hide-and-seek with the paparazzi. Dodi's preference for his father's security arrangements rather than official police protection, and his choice of Henri Paul, the deputy head of security at the Ritz, as driver, despite his apparently obvious euphoric condition due to drink and drugs. (According to one source, Paul mounted the assembled photographers: "You won't catch us tonight. Don't even try.")

If you live in a world in which a 44-strong security force controlled by a 24-hour centre is necessary, their very necessity predates the existence of an army of enemies, real and imagined. Enemy number one in Al Fayed's mind has always been the mythical "British Establishment" which has blocked his efforts to gain citizenship and social acceptability and which, in his view, could not accept that the Princess was in love with Dodi. This is what he told the authors:

"Maybe the future king is going to have a half-brother who is a 'nigger'; Mohamed Al Fayed is going to be the stepgrandfather of the future

Sifting the evidence for shards of intrigue



Post mortem of a crash: the crushed Mercedes Benz

king. This is how they think, this Establishment."

Sancton and MacLeod, who have a tendency to refer to "smug British aristocrats", discount the wilder flights of conspiracy fantasy but cannot entirely dismiss from their minds a naive view of the British intelligence services as a collection of ruthless James Bonds. The accident, which arguably might not have happened if Henri Paul's path through the underpass had not been obstructed by a vehicle in the inside lane, could, they think, have been provoked by a rogue MI6 operative or a surveillance operation that went disastrously wrong.

What does emerge from their careful sifting of the evidence available to them is that there appears to have been at least one other car — the mysterious Fiat Uno — and one motorcycle in the tunnel at the time of the accident and that they swiftly

departed the scene. They may have carried paparazzi (not the aptly named Rat and his colleagues who were later detained by the police at the scene) and may have forced Paul to take evasive action which his speed, the configuration of the Alma tunnel and

the presence of an innocent car narrowing his escape options turned into the fatal crash.

In the end the authors, unsurprisingly, seem unable to make up their minds about anything

— about responsibility for the accident, Diana's rumoured pregnancy, whether she spoke before she died. They hint at a sinister cover-up by French officialdom. "Our judicial source," they write, "spoke to us of the 'terrible secret' that weighs on this dossier."

What this secret might have been, they do not venture to speculate. They claim from the testimony of the Fayed family and retainers and the evidence of a ring

from the jewellers that Diana and Dodi intended to marry.

They make the point that French accident and emergency procedure, which involves stabilising the patient on the spot — as opposed to the English and American method of getting the patient to hospital as quickly as possible — meant that it was a full hour and 40 minutes after the accident before the Princess reached hospital, at which point she suffered a cardiac arrest and died.

This is not, nor does it claim to be, the definitive account. The French investigation will not be concluded until midsummer this year and the British coroner's inquiry is still to come. The authors have been painstaking in their collection of detail, even down to the list of the victim's effects at the time of the crash — Dodi's included no fewer than three watches, while the driver was carrying nearly £1,000 in cash. Their prose is occasionally atrocious — "French magistrates are not potted plants" — and sprinkled with *Helio-lism*: the suite at the Paris Ritz where the couple spent their last evening is "decorated with Empire furniture upholstered in red satin, richly coloured Persian carpets, crystal chandeliers and brass candelabra."

From information given by Dodi's family and friends, they have chronicled the sad, short life of a poor little rich boy — a lonely man who was "at his best when talking to people on the telephone that never seemed to leave his hand", and whose apartments were filled with stuffed animals and self-help books. For Diana, who was also lonely, in need of love and lived through the telephone, Dodi's vulnerability was irresistible. The best thing that can be said about this ultimately tragic tale is that the couple were, briefly, happy.

Of one thing we can be sure: we have not heard the last of it. Diana's family is fated to be dragged painfully and publicly through it over and over again. As it has been with John F. Kennedy in Dallas, so it will be with Diana in the underpass at the Place de l'Alma. It is entirely possible that 40 years from now, a future Oliver Stone will be making *Death of a Princess* based on a "new interpretation" of the facts. It is an infinitely depressing prospect.

DEATH OF A PRINCESS

An Investigation
By Thomas Sancton
and Scott MacLeod
Weidenfeld & Nicolson,
£18.99
ISBN 0 297 842 315



Shaded truth: Capote attempted to arrange his life to suit an image of his existence as "a fabulous story"

Pills 'n' spills

From his earliest years he had the voice of an expiring dolphin: when excited, he would squeak. He gloried in "bitterscootch hair", and always looked half his real age — until the end, that is, when he looked no age at all. When he was in high spirits he would leap into the air, arms outstretched and scream "I'm beside myself!"

He knew instinctively how to divert and to amuse; he always considered himself a "freck", to use his own word, and decided to supplant nature with nurture. Even when he was an infant he was an *enfant terrible*. Some said he resembled an elf or pidge but, if so, he was always a pidge with a whim of iron. Somehow he managed to escape his natal origins in the South and, at the age of 18, to become a copy-boy in the offices of *The New Yorker* magazine. From that time forward he conducted his life, in the words of one of the contributors to this entertaining memoir, "like a carefully planned military campaign".

His first, vaguely homosexual, novel was more than a scandal; it was a success. In fact it could be said that *Other Voices, Other Rooms* represents the best fiction he ever wrote. He had a good ear for casual speech, only partly tempered by a somewhat ornate or not exactly purple prose. As soon as he was acclaimed as a genius, he travelled to Paris. Here he was introduced to various interesting parties solely on the grounds "that person was so-and-so in Proust." The delicate connection between society and literature was one Capote never forgot.

He may have been an only child but the more difficult familial problems came relatively late. Just after he had enjoyed his first success, his mother committed suicide and his father was committed to Sing Sing for embezzlement. It is said that these events "haunted" him for the rest of his life, but there is very little evidence of this. Capote was a singular human being — Norman Mailer believes that he knew he led "a special life" — and he is not likely to have reacted (if he reacted at all) in any orthodox way.

It is not hard to find taste for the "special". He demanded to be the single most important human being in everyone's existence. Like many good novelists he turned his own life into a fabulous story, and fictionalised all those who accompanied him on the way. He always

Freaky kid, naughty elf or bona fide enfant terrible?
Peter Ackroyd takes on a sunken genius

wished to be in command; he manipulated people and engineered "situations". It was appropriate, then, that he was an extremely good and persistent liar, creating such interesting and entertaining fabrications that eventually he himself came to believe them. There were close friends, however, who noticed that he always put on dark glasses when he was about to lie; they were known as "the shades of truth."

That propensity may mark passages of his most famous book, *In Cold Blood*, which narrates the history of a particularly unpleasant multiple murder in western

celebrity more than talent; he spoke once of "the glare of life", by which he meant his artificial brightness.

It is hardly surprising, then, that he turned against the powerful friends whom he had once courted. When he published *Answered Prayers*, a thinly veiled account of the more unsocial activities of those in "society", he was dropped. The telephone no longer rang. He stayed in his bedroom, crying, with the curtains closed. He began to drink heavily.

There was another reason for his unhappiness. He believed that he could turn gossip into literature, but the book was not well received. It is, in fact, a flimsy thing, marked by febrile and facile writing; although it is short, it seems prolix. And, as one contributor to this volume suggests, "in America, there is no room for failure." A writer is only as successful as his last book. Capote knew this better than anyone, of course, and he fell into despair.

He did not drink because he had lost a few friends — there were plenty more where they came from. He drank because he knew that he could no longer write well. As soon as he lost touch with his genius — if that is what it was — he began systematically to destroy himself. The last years were truly dreadful: his brain shrunk because of the daily ingestion of booze and pills. When he was urged to stop before it was too late, he replied: "Let me go. Let me go. I want to go."

It is the virtue of this book, composed primarily of oral reminiscences from various "friends, enemies, acquaintances and detractors", that Capote can be seen and heard at first hand. There are so many different voices, just like those at the parties which he gave remorselessly, that he comes alive from a hundred different vantage points.

He should, however, be given the last word — he once wrote that the artist, like the criminal and the neurotic, "have unpredictability and perverted innocence in common." It is too long for an epitaph, but it may serve as an appropriate epigraph for this engaging and entertaining narrative.

Peter Ackroyd's latest book, *The Life of Thomas More*, will be published next month by Chatto & Windus.

TRUMAN CAPOTE
By George Plimpton
Picador, £20
ISBN 0 330 3871 0

Kansas. It was, according to one of the investigators of the case, essentially a work of fiction dressed up as fact; instead of being a non-fictional novel, as Capote claimed, it was an exercise in fictional journalism. He was unhappy that it won no prizes, however, and instead of writing another book he gave a ball. From all accounts it was a rather gruesome affair, although most of the participants had the good sense to wear masks.

Someone once described him as a "caramelised tarantula", but the sweetest was more than skin deep. He was very good with the innocent and the vulnerable, for example, perhaps because they represented the best part of himself. But he also demanded constant attention, and achieved fame with a potent mixture of guile, ambition and wilfulness. He aspired to the fashionable world, even though he knew that its inhabitants respected wealth more than character,

The sail of the century?

NEITHER euphonious nor broadly evocative, *Gaff Topsails* is not — except, perhaps to the avid sailor — an auspicious title for a novel. Nor does the prospect of 431 pages about a single day in a remote Roman Catholic fishing community in Newfoundland entice wildly. To succumb to these prejudices

would, however, be a shame. Patrick Kavanagh's debut is a rich and ambitious book, fully engaged with the strange language of its protagonists, and with the complex intersections of their lives.

Set on midsummer's day in June, 1948, *Gaff Topsails* ripples with internal currents. The isolated and disappointed

priest, Father MacMurrough, reminisces about his youth in Ireland and his former posting in New Guinea; the frail altar boy, Kevin Barron, sees in each flower and fish a manifestation of good or evil; a working of God's plan; his mute older brother, Michael, on a fishing expedition with his boisterous mates, Gus and Wish, falls in love with a distant vision. Rebellious young Mary, along with her tarty pals Moira and Alice, wants to find true love on the last day of school; her mother, home with a baby, sits planned on the roof watching out for her fisherman husband. The mad lighthouse keeper, Johnny, teeters and babbles among townspeople and nuns alike.

Around these figures swirl others, including the less articulate but no less resonant elements of their territory: the vast and sighing iceberg which has drifted into the bay to melt; the shoals of fish and the means of their harvesting; the weather itself; and the mythical bogeyman, Masterless Man of local lore. Kavanagh devotes many pages to the tale of Tomas Croft, an Irish castaway and the forefather of these characters and of their highly superstitious community.

The novel's enterprise is a risky one — not least for its broad and inescapable nods to another Irish antecedent and his *Ulysses*. There are passages of overwriting; there are wilful preciosities, such as Michael's unexplained muteness; there is a somewhat relentless freightage of the incidental with religious import. When one of Michael's fellow breaks wind, we are told that "a raw odour passes briefly by Michael's nostrils. A foul presence, a soul on its way to hell".

But *Gaff Topsails* is a commendable book, quietly moving. Above all, it thrills to language, and brings the ordinary to new life — as when Mary's mother muses that, "I should buy them seeds and get out the matted and make up that park and be done with yawning about it. Put some order in the world. The ground is thick and damp and mungy enough, the buds would sprout by the feast of Saint Bonaventure." By rendering so faithfully the woman's diction, Kavanagh gives us not only the character, but her world and its texture, a fine achievement indeed.

Claire Messud's novel, *When the World was Steady*, is published in paperback by Granta, £6.99.

Claire Messud

GAFF TOPSAILS
By Patrick Kavanagh
Hamish Hamilton, £16.99
ISBN 0 241 13784 5

The scientists and our future

FOUR OF THE WORLD'S leading scientists will debate with Melvyn Bragg "Why science matters" at a Times/Dillons forum. The experts are Professor Susan Greenfield, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford; Professor Sir Roger Penrose, Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford; Professor Sir Martin Rees, the Royal Astronomer; and Dr John Gribbin, Visiting Fellow in Astronomy at the University of Sussex. They will

discuss the impact of science on our lives and our future and explore scientific breakthroughs.

The forum, on March 5 at 8pm at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, marks the publication of Bragg's book, *On Giants' Shoulders — Great Scientists and their discoveries from Archimedes to DNA* (Hodder & Stoughton, £12.99). The admission price of £10 (cones £7.50) includes £2 off the book.



Melvyn Bragg

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Some funny business in the London of his dreams

WILLIAM BOYD has always managed to stay left of field in the literary mainstream. His comic style links to previous generations — Evelyn Waugh and Kingsley Amis, and he favours Africa or America over England as a milieu. Having said that, his seventh novel is set in modern London. And if African society can be said to teem with life, so *Armadillo* is teeming with characters — Dickensian grotesques all talking at cross purposes. And when you take care of your characters as well as this (after a curiously inert first chapter), the story takes care of itself.

Boyd's themes of identity and the desire for certainty are explored through his hero, Lorimer Black (real name:

Russell Celyn Jones

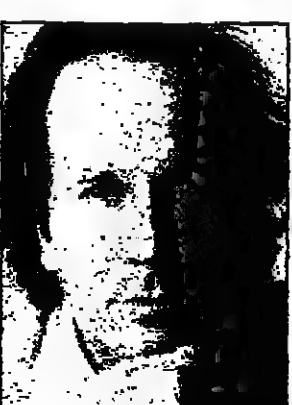
ARMADILLO
By William Boyd
Hamish Hamilton, £16.99
ISBN 0 241 13928 7

Miloure Bloj, from a family of Transnistrian Gypsies, who is an insurance loss adjuster. Investigating the destruction by fire of the Fedora Palace hotel, he only has to hint at arson to get the payment reduced from £27 million to £10 million. No wonder he's as welcome as a disease.

Lorimer is pitched as a sympathetic character, not through any seduction by

voice, which would have been the smarter option, but in counterpointing him against colleagues Hogg, an unscrupulous philosopher of ruin ("our vocation — to disturb all anticipations"), and the manic carouser Torquil Helvoir-Jayne.

Moreover, Lorimer is constantly shelling out to save his family cab company in Fulham from going belly-up. He adopts his dying neighbour's dog, rescues a physically abused actress and supports his local flower stallholder. In his diary he notes his personal failings and records his dreams — which are monitored at the Institute of Lucid Dreams, a sub-plot reminiscent of Jonathan Coe's recent novel, *The House of Sleep*. As



Boyd: comic story teller

Even his girlfriend's daughter threatens to kill him if he doesn't get out of her mother's face. And if all this fails to rally you to his side, there may well be something fishy about that hotel fire after all.

London is not so much invented as unscrolled. Names fly by on the page as Lorimer drives through it: Boyd relishes the Victorian melancholy of Silvertown; and on the Old Kent Road Lorimer finds his beloved cabbies still surviving, where dishes that used to give England such a bad culinary name remain on the menu.

In these establishments Boyd can make a comic impact in a single sentence. His satirical instinct is best suited to the old world, the underbel-

ly of colonialism, personified in the import-export businesses along the A2, the pubs around Smithfield Market. *Armadillo* purports to be a literary comedy but sits somewhere between the two stools. Yet what Boyd lacks in psychological depth he makes up for with story-telling prowess. In this bighearted novel, all the breaches in emotional certainty converge into a pattern — a solved conspiracy involving South African businessmen and knighted English underpenners. Thankfully, fiction is not like life. Only in fiction can we find the security of order that we crave.

Russell Celyn Jones's latest novel, *The Boy Hunter*, will be published next month by Little Brown.

Black beauty made fair game

WHO WAS the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's sonnets? Some 25 years ago, reading the casebooks of the Elizabethan astrologer Simon Forman, the historian A. L. Rowse came up with a new candidate: Emilia Bassano, a woman of Italian extraction, mistress of the Lord Chamberlain, in later life a pious vestal.

As dark ladies go, Emilia has promiscuity in her favour, plus Forman's report that she struck him as more *incuba* than woman. Rowse was soitten, clinching his case with the astrologer's further remark that this lady had been "very brown in youth". Unfortunately, another scholar soon pointed out that Rowse had misread Forman's handwriting. The word was not brown, but *brave* (meaning showy). Worse, there is no evidence that Emilia Bassano ever met William Shakespeare. Let alone went to bed with him.

Such details do not bother Michael Baldwin. His novel *Dark Lady* is based on the assumption that Rowse was right, though he nowhere refers to him except to make one possible pun on his name ("a rouse") on page 184. The book is a romp with Emilia at the heart of it. She is presented as a witch whose spells are responsible for the murder of Christopher Marlowe and the burning of the Globe Theatre. She considers Shakespeare's verses inferior to her own.

Robert Nye

DARK LADY
By Michael Baldwin
Little, Brown, £16.99
ISBN 0 31666062 2

falling asleep when he recites *Venus and Adonis*, and despising his sonnets, "none of them lasting longer than a yawn".

Since this is a work of fiction, Baldwin can be forgiven for dropping 12 years off the Lord Chamberlain's age, presumably to make his sexual performances more credible. Less forgivable is the book's style.

THE narrative passages are clogged: the dialogue frantically witty. Everyone talks like Shakespeare on an off-day, except Shakespeare. He speaks bluntly: "Thing is, Emilia, we'll be giving one of my plays... It will be the usual patchwork of stuff I've written, stuff that actors have scribbled, stuff I've borrowed, and half a thousand lines I'll have stolen." The wonder is that Emilia allows the clown bed-room. Sensibly, she does seem to prefer the company of her other lovers, even Southampton, who has a problem which makes him sick whenever she touches him.

Baldwin is a talented writer, and this book has its bright moments, despite the fog of words. Like his *The First Mrs Wotton* it achieves sharpness by seeing a male writer through the eyes of a woman in his life. But the reader has to make a huge suspension of disbelief to suppose that Emilia Bassano was in Shakespeare's life. And it is only fair to give warning that this suspension is not assisted by the opening scenes in which the Lord Chamberlain spends an unconscionably long time kicking his mistress in the belly in an attempt to rid her of an inconvenient pregnancy.

Robert Nye's latest novel, *The Late Mr Shakespeare*, will be published in April by Chatto & Windus.

It feels faster than you think

Roy Porter discovers that Darwin makes him grin — even if modern science cannot quite explain why

THE simultaneous appearance of these two books inevitably prompts the question: how far has the science of emotions come over the past century and a quarter? What can Professor LeDoux now tell us that Charles Darwin didn't know?

First published in 1872, Darwin's work has always been the least celebrated of his trio of classics. But if less of a bombshell than the *Origin of Species*, it forms an essential coupling with the *Descent of Man* and remains in many ways his most engaging study.

Displaying all his redoubtable talents for unearthing hidden detail, Darwin starts from closely observed faces, often those of his own children and pets, or creatures at London Zoo. How exactly are fear, joy, anger, grief and other feelings expressed? Observant as ever, he points out how, in the case of suffering, for example, that it is the eyebrow muscles that count, wrinkling the eyes and producing a heavy frown; or that when very young babies cry, the mouth is held square open, whereas toddlers cry with the mouth more closed. Such findings made innovative use of more than 200 photographs.

Of course, a theoretical thrust lies behind these facts. By demonstrating that not all expressions are present from birth — babies scream from the first but they don't actually shed tears till later — Darwin

THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN

The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life

By Joseph LeDoux
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £8.99
ISBN 0 27101034 1

THE EXPRESSION OF THE EMOTIONS IN MAN AND ANIMALS

By Charles Darwin
HarperCollins, £14.99
ISBN 0 00 253866 1

aimed to show how emotions (weeping in this case) may be learnt. In the course of development, they then become habits, and such acquired characteristics, he argued in his oddly Lamarckian fashion, finally become inherited.

Moreover, he demonstrated how identical muscular actions — say, baring the teeth — are used to express similar emotions (snarling) among the different "races" of mankind. And he further showed that these are also mirrored in the expressions of dogs, monkeys and other animals. By such means Darwin hoped to confirm his evolutionary theory of the descent of man. Displays of emotions did not merely have a survival value; they pointed to a physiological

continuum from animals to man. The enduring validity of many of these conclusions is stressed in the lucid commentary and afterword by the distinguished American psychologist Paul Ekman.

The magnitude of Darwin's achievement is obliquely highlighted by *The Emotional Brain*. As the neurobiologist Joseph LeDoux candidly acknowledges, during the first half of this century the behaviourist dogma — denying subjective states and focusing exclusively on conditioning — ruled the study of emotions clean out of court. Later, interest in Darwin's questions has further been dampened by cognitive science's preoccupation with thought processes. Emotion has thus been an embarrassment to experimenters, but LeDoux views himself as putting feeling back on to the agenda.

His study contains much of interest. No reader can fail to be fascinated by his clear accounts of how primary emotional responses can be mapped upon distinctive segments of the brain, especially the amygdala, a region rather independent of the frontal cortex (the "thinking" part of the brain). Here lies an anatomical explanation as to why reflex responses, like freezing in danger situations, are done without a conscious decision — and are all the better for being thus unconscious. LeDoux's point is to show we respond to danger before



The fearful face: a means was devised to "activate" expression with electricity and then photograph the anguished faces. Note that Darwin had the engraver remove the electrodes (right)

becoming aware of being afraid. In view of this, he maintains that basic instincts must be "hard wired", that is, inherited.

But overall the impression conveyed by this book, despite its upbeat tone, is how little progress science has made since Darwin's day in explaining our emotions. LeDoux gives us a tour of the experimental and theoretical work being conducted today. But most of it sounds like the old conventional experiments, testing how rats respond to shocks, warmed over once more. Important though it is to

study fear — here might lie, after all, clues to human phobias and neuroses — LeDoux's focus upon responses to predators is (thankfully, one must say) only a fraction of the gamut of human emotional possibilities. On feelings such as joy or falling in love he is utterly silent. While we are at least spared the tendentious dogmas of psychological Darwinism — the sage of the selfish gene so pervasive in recent American works like Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works* — it is indicative of the hole that today's science has dug for itself that

LeDoux gets on to consciousness only in a final and token chapter. Rightly crediting Darwin, LeDoux would doubtless subscribe to the evolutionist Theodosius Dobzhansky's homage to that great pioneer: "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution." Nevertheless, all these rat and rabbit experiments in reality shed remarkably little light on how human beings feel. Give me Darwin any time. His work, old though it may be, still elicits a far stronger emotional response: it brought smiles of delight to my face.

The drearier the better. Raymond Seitz finds his heroes in the dullest backwaters



Yarn-master in a spin

Garrison Keillor is a storyteller, and spinner of yarns who fits comfortably into the well-established tradition of American humour most fondly identified with the works of Mark Twain. Like Twain, he is an accomplished practitioner of the art of the tall tale. Delivered in nonchalant fashion, the tall tale makes the improbable sound plausible and, in the hands of a pro, it can be very funny.

Keillor is a pro, reared by radio but now in print as well, arriving as he did in 1990 with his colourful collection of essays called *Lake Wobegon Days*. So prolific and imaginative is the writer that his publisher, Faber and Faber, have listed in the front of the book not only the previous works by the author but his forthcoming titles as well — eight on the way. When Keillor starts spinning, he just can't stop. And on the whole, we are the better for it.

As a vehicle for his storytelling Keillor has this time

chosen a novel, and once again, the Midwestern town of Lake Wobegon provides the material from which he weaves his amazing Minnesota dreamworld. Lake Wobegon, settled by stolid Norwegian stock in the 19th century, is a pretty dreary place, hardly lightened by the "phlegmatic moralism" of the Lutheran community — don't complain, don't feel sorry for yourself, work off your guilt by serving on committees. The town, says Keillor, is "the world headquarters of meekness" where dullness has been honed to the keenest edge. (There is also a small community of Roman Catholics which gathers annually for the Blessing of the Snowmobiles at Our Lady of

WOBEGON BOY
By Garrison Keillor
Faber, £16.99
ISBN 0 571 9351 X

Perpetual Responsibility.) The Sons of Knute hang out at the Chatterbox Café, and from such characters we hear Keillor's repertoire of yarns. The simple plot of *Wobegon Boy* hangs loosely from its shoulders. John Tallese, the passive, diffident narrator, lands a job at a small New England college for the non-too-bright progeny of America's East Coast families. He runs the campus radio station devoted mainly to classical

music, but no sooner does he take up his position than he comes under politically correct pressure to switch the format to the socially sensitive issues which make up the lumpy agenda heard so often today on American airwaves (audio omitted), Keillor calls it).

John falls in love with Alida Freeman, a New York intellectual who happens to be doing research on Bolle Balesstrand (the shadowy Norwegian immigrant of the 19th century who drafted the Gettysburg Address for Lincoln and managed to survive Custer's Last Stand). John can't quite believe that a Manhattan sophisticate could really fall for a guilt-ridden hick from the Midwest boondocks, and he is certain

he will lose her affections when they both head off to Lake Wobegon after John's father suddenly dies.

As Alida learns about Lake Wobegon, we hear one story after another. They are bony and funny (imagine Siamese twins playing semi-professional baseball — one was left-handed and the other right-handed) and told in the inimitable Keillor style. But the yarns are really monologues masquerading as dialogue, and the proliferation of these comic routines weakens the momentum of the novel.

As in most of Keillor's work, prosaic Lake Wobegon is the real hero because its very dullness is heroic. According to one character, "Either this town moves forward or else it moves backward": to which his friend replies: "I wouldn't offer these people a choice like that."

Raymond Seitz's memoir, *Over Here*, is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, priced £20.

More than just another coming of age story

BLENDED the gritty magic of Gabriel García Márquez with the fey historicism of Isabel Allende, and you might end up with a novel like *LOVESICK* — a gutsy romance played out against a backdrop of Latin American revolution. In this, her second book, the Mexican author Angeles Mastretta (translated here by Margaret Sayers Peden) tackles the love story — a genre in which her continent abounds — with mettle and quirky imagination. Her talent lies in stirring together classical tradition with modern insight, historical saga with fictional romance, and seasoning the brew with political fervour and passionate emotion.

Rachel Campbell-Johnston

LOVESICK
By Angeles Mastretta
Jonathan Cape, £9.99
ISBN 0 234 85032 X

Where Mastretta's work differs, refreshingly, from the rash of other Latin American novels which of late have been finding their way into English translation is in her eschewing of the giddy flights of Magical Realism. The fantastical is too often relied upon by less confident writers to cloak slender characterisation or tenuous plot. But in *LOVESICK* the enchantment lies not so much in the incredible as in the idiosyncrasy of its author's observation. As the long sentences unroll (smoothly translated from the Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden) details, which in themselves may be quite normal, in juxtaposition seem suddenly bizarre.

Daniel Cuenca, who runs off to join the Mexican revolution, and her desire to become a doctor.

This is a novel about the coming of age of Mexico. A society nursed on myth and dragged through a violent adolescence of warfare, matures into the 20th century and all the new conflicts that that presents. *LOVESICK* mingles politics with passion, sets ancient gods against modern revolutionary ideas, it chuckles handfuls of violence into daily life and lets trial and torture range with a tale of love. But at times it seems to trip itself up in its own imitations, and the reader, losing the drive of the narrative, grows weary.

Search for the bare bones

Anne Karpf

HESHEL'S KINGDOM

By Dan Jacobson
Hamish Hamilton, £15.99
ISBN 0 241 13827 9

America, prospecting for a rabbinical position which could take him and his family far from Lithuania. But finding there such impiety and apostasy — such modernity — he cleaved back instead to the claved back, instead to "der heim", the evocative Yiddish term for a homeland.

Luckily for his family he died in 1919 aged 53, forcing his now even more impoverished widow and her nine children to emigrate to South Africa and thereby save their lives. The rest of the family perished: in the Holocaust. Jacobson, after a secular childhood in the diamond mining town of Kimberley, and a distinguished career as a novelist and professor in London, returned to Lithuania after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in

search of records of his grandfather and other relatives. He begins the book with an inventory of Heshel's few remaining belongings, principally the photo taken before the American trip. So extensive is the author's scrutiny of this that it seems as if the material is too slight to support the weight of his speculation. Similarly once he starts, in Lithuania, to describe with his over-exercised novelist's eye the towns and topograph-

ies, one begins to fear that each of the country's rivers, bridges and paths will eventually be documented.

Such copiousness, an understandable if futile attempt at preservation, forces the reader have to endlessly re-visit the countryside, and makes the text lag. The book is also riddled with what Jacobson calls "the divine power of hindsight". When he finally reaches the killing fields of Lithuania where his relatives probably died, he can't escape a note of sentimentality ("bones of my bone, DNA of my DNA"), even as he rightly draws attention to the inadequacy of language in the face of the Holocaust.

On the other hand, Jacobson's tableaux of his irreligious family in South



Jacobson: curious memoir

Africa brim with wit, while his descriptions of Lithuanian hotels and individuals give way to a charged tenderness as he sketches in "the last Jew in Varniai" who is so excited to meet him.

Most usefully, he retrieves information about the murder of Lithuanian Jews, most of

whom were not killed in the well-known gas chambers of Poland but in smaller, pre-industrial batches at the hands of the "Einsatzgruppen". But Jacobson's central theme is the irreversibility of the past, and here he makes a real contribution. In Lithuania he may have found only family traces but he achieves the connection he has craved with his mother's world and makes his peace with it, no longer blaming his grandfather for having abjured modernity. In a touching coda, he dreams himself back to an old Lithuania where he is reintegrated into his family of origin who, though they won't migrate, will survive for ever, because there will be no Hitler.

Anne Karpf's family memoir, *The War After: Living with the Holocaust*, is published in paperback by Minerva, £6.99.

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Delay caused by solicitors unacceptable

Lownes v Babcock Power Ltd
Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice Potter
(Judgment February 11)

Inordinate and inexcusable delay in civil litigation caused by default on the part of solicitors was totally unacceptable. Prejudice to the client resulting from the striking out of his action had to be balanced against the prejudice to the other party, out of litigation and the administration of justice in general.

"Unless" orders were to be treated as one step away from the dismissal of the action in order to ensure that court orders were obeyed.

Where a solicitor's default prejudiced his client, the solicitor was under a duty to ensure that the client was advised by fresh solicitors at the earliest opportunity.

As a matter of practice there was a great advantage to preparing skeleton arguments sequentially. Although the Rules of the Supreme Court did not so provide, counsel could agree to exchange skeleton arguments sequentially and thereby assist the court so long as the arguments were provided to the court at least 14 days before the hearing.

The Court of Appeal so held, dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff, Robert Lownes, against the dismissal of his appeal and his action for damages for personal injuries against his employers, Babcock Power Ltd, on March 14, 1997 by Judge Bentley, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge in the Sheffield District Registry. The appeal was against the refusal on November 1, 1996 by District Judge Hawkesworth to grant an extension of time to comply with an "unless" order contained in a consent order.

The plaintiff, who was employed by the defendants, suffered an accident at work on November 13, 1989 and was left paraplegic. His trade union instructed Thompson, an experienced firm of solicitors in the field, who issued a writ in April 1990 and at first conducted

the case expeditiously. In 1993 the writ was amended to add the defendants being 80 per cent responsible and the plaintiff 20 per cent. In December 1993 Mr Peter Bamford, a partner, took over conduct of the case. He has since left the firm.

Wholly unjustified and inexcusable delay occurred on the part of the plaintiff's solicitors, who in particular failed to produce a comprehensive schedule of damages. The parties came close to settlement in 1995, but the terms were rejected by the plaintiff's solicitors.

In 1996 the defendants' solicitors, who had paid about £500,000 into court, applied to strike out the action. The plaintiff's solicitors then agreed a consent order, made on October 1, 1996 in the form of an "unless" order, which included an order for service of a comprehensive schedule of damages to be produced within 28 days.

Failing to comply, the plaintiff's solicitors applied for an extension of 14 days to serve the schedule of damages, which was refused. The plaintiff's appeal to Judge Bentley, QC, was dismissed and judgment given for the defendants. The plaintiff appealed.

Mr Benn Hynes, QC, for the plaintiff, Mr Anthony Goldsmith, QC, for the defendants.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that the case dramatically demonstrated that the manner in which personal injuries litigation was sometimes conducted was not in the interests of the parties, the courts or justice. It also showed that it could be extremely damaging to the reputation of lawyers.

The plaintiff's criticisms of the judge's decision were not made out. The defendants were entitled to a schedule of damages to evaluate the claim properly and to calculate correctly the amount to pay into court. They were prejudiced by the plaintiff's failure to serve a schedule.

The plaintiff's main argument

was that the judge failed to stand back and look at the position as a whole. That argument could only be advanced in relation to the final default of a solicitor who had conducted himself in such a way.

The person who suffered because the action was dismissed was not the plaintiff's solicitor but the plaintiff personally therefore it could be said that the judge was visiting the sins of the solicitor on the client and should not be for the desire to discipline the solicitor injure the plaintiff personally.

His Lordship was very conscious of the force of that point but it was wrong to give way to it. The plaintiff, even in a personal injuries case, had to be responsible for the conduct of his solicitor. Consideration had to be given to the position of parties to other litigation.

If an "unless" order were not treated as the last opportunity to put one's house in order, the court had no way to ensure that such orders were obeyed and such delays would continue to occur.

Even in the case of a consent order, the situation was self-evident. The only way that particular solicitor could be made to perform his duty was by such an order.

The status of "unless" orders had been fully considered in a number of authorities. Those had been reviewed by the Court of Appeal in *Hyatt Information Systems Ltd v Coventry City Council* [1997] 1 WLR 1066.

The approach of the courts was not new, but went back to 1980, including *Samuels v Lind Dresses Ltd* [1981] QB 119, *Re Joke's Tea Holdings* [1992] 1 WLR 1196 and *Carlisle v The City of Carlisle* [1993] 1 WLR 1293.

In *Firmen v Ellis* [1978] QB 885, Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, had said:

"As a matter of simple justice, it is the defendant's insurers who should pay the plaintiff's costs. They have caused the accident. They should not be allowed to foist

their liability on to the plaintiff's solicitors or their insurers, by calling 'snap' as if it were a game of cards."

Those remarks should in no way be considered as affecting the other decisions to which his Lordship had referred, but referred to a case where one party was seeking to take advantage of a technical breach by the other.

The appeal had to be dismissed, but everything should be done to reduce the consequences to the plaintiff as far as possible. The solicitors were officers of the court under a duty to do all in their power to ensure that the plaintiff suffered no more than was necessary as a result of their default.

The minimum required was that the plaintiff should be independent advice at the earliest opportunity. The present solicitors were under a duty to ensure that the plaintiff was represented as soon as possible by fresh solicitors. Those now in Thompsons were ashamed of the wholly inappropriate way the case had been handled.

It might be in the plaintiff's interests to issue a writ against his former solicitors or make an arrangement with their insurers. The two insurers could agree to meet the plaintiff's claim in the meantime. If they could not agree on quantum they could agree an interim payment.

Where only one of two possible defendants was liable, the Rules of the Supreme Court did not give the court power to make an interim payment order against either defendant: see *Rizzi Burns Ltd v Toole* [1999] 1 WLR 993 on Order 23, rule 1.

That fact did not prevent the parties from making such interim payments. When it was in the interest of the parties they should be prepared to do that.

His Lordship wished to make further remarks of general application.

The facts vividly illustrated that delays could have a serious effect on individual plaintiffs. Over 90 per cent of personal injuries claims

were settled. This plaintiff's case had been compromised far earlier.

It was in the interests of solicitors to handle cases in a business-like way. Delay had an effect in extra work on the plaintiff's solicitors, the defendants' solicitors and clients. Additional costs were incurred.

If the costs of litigation went beyond what the defendants' insurers had expected, it was bound to affect the level of premium for the insured.

Delays also had an effect on the administration of justice by increasing court time and putting other cases further back in the queue. That damaged the reputation of civil justice.

The message to the profession, which should be read and understood, was that the standard of diligence in this case was totally unacceptable. In balancing the prejudice to the plaintiff against the prejudice to the defendants, account had to be taken of prejudice to other litigants and the administration of justice generally.

As a matter of practice on skeleton arguments, the latest practice direction (Court of Appeal: Procedural Changes, paragraph 59/1/17 in volume 1 of the *Supreme Court Practice* 1997) provided that unless the court gave specific directions, skeleton arguments were to be exchanged simultaneously. There was no scope for sequential skeleton arguments to be adopted.

In view of the language that was an understandable view, but it involved a misconception. Counsel could agree between themselves to prepare skeleton arguments sequentially.

That was a great advantage in many cases. In considering only arguments actually raised and focusing on the real issues thereby assisting the court. The skeleton arguments still had to be available to the court at least 14 days before the hearing.

Lord Justice Potter agreed.

Solicitors: Thompsons, Sheffield; Whitfield Hallam Goodall, Dewsbury.

Judge lost advantage of immediacy

Goose v Wilson Sandford and Co
Before Lord Justice Potter, Lord Justice Brooke and Lord Justice Mummery
(Judgment February 13)

In normal circumstances, the trial judge who had seen and heard the witnesses had an advantage which was likely to prove decisive when his findings were disputed on appeal.

However, when judgment was delivered 20 months after the hearing, the Court of Appeal had to look with particular care at the findings of fact which were challenged and was entitled to conclude that by the long delay the judge had denied himself the opportunity of considering in any meaningful way the impression the witnesses had made on him when giving evidence about matters which troubled him.

Therefore, despite the additional expense and stress that would be incurred upon the parties, justice required that a retrial be ordered.

The Court of Appeal so ruled when unanimously allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Rex Goose, from an order of Mr Justice Harman on April 1, 1996, dismissing his claim against the defendants, Wilson Sandford and Co, a firm of chartered accountants practising in Brighton, for damages for breach of contract, negligence and deceit, for equitable compensation for breach of fiduciary duty and for dishonestly assisting a fiduciary, Peter Bray, in a dishonest breach of fiduciary duty.

Mr Alan Boyle, QC, and Mr Philip Marshall for the plaintiff; Mr Ronald Walker, QC and Mrs Catherine Brown for the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE PETER GIBSON, giving the reserved judgment of the court, said that Mr Goose was a farmer who on his father's death inherited Hagbeach Farm, of some 480 acres at Whaplode Drive, Spalding, Lincolnshire, where his family had farmed for over 100 years.

He was interested in acquiring a farm in France as farmland was cheaper there than in England. In March 1984 he was given the name of Peter Bray as being someone who was also interested in acquiring a French farm.

Unknown to Mr Goose, Mr Bray was a fraudster who had twice been convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment and had already been made bankrupt.

Mr Goose was impressed by Mr Bray. Mr Goose was willing to enter into a syndicate scheme suggested by Mr Bray for each of them to buy farms in France with money raised in Switzerland on the security of their own assets, including Hagbeach Farm.

The borrower in Switzerland was to be an English company, Intag Estates Ltd, which was incorporated for Mr Bray. Mr Bray was to be chairman, Mr Goose a director and both were shareholders. At Mr Bray's suggestion Mr Goose agreed that Intag's accounts.

In autumn 1985 Mr Bray's scheme collapsed and Mr Goose lost the money that Intag had defaulted on interest payments. In March

1986 he learned for the first time that Mr Bray was an undischarged bankrupt.

In June 1989 a winding up petition was made against Intag. In 1987 Mr Goose was made bankrupt.

In 1989 Mr Bray was sentenced to four years imprisonment when he pleaded guilty to charges of dishonesty in connection with the transactions. In October 1990 Mr Goose was discharged from bankruptcy.

The trial before Mr Justice Harman started on June 9, 1994 and ended on July 13. Opening submissions lasted two days, the evidence took 17 days and closing submissions lasted eight days.

The parties and the judge were furnished with daily transcripts of the evidence and a huge amount of written material was placed before the judge. At the end of the hearing the judge reserved judgment.

In January 1995 Mr Goose's solicitors wrote to the judge asking if he could give any indication as to when judgment might be expected. The judge's clerk replied that the judge was in the middle of drafting his judgment.

In June 1996 leading counsel wrote to the judge's clerk asking the parties then heard that the judge was about to be admitted to hospital and they discussed the possibility of insuring the risk that he would be unable to deliver judgment.

In January 1996 Mr Goose's solicitors were constrained to write on behalf of both parties to the Vice-Chancellor, who told them he had spoken to the judge and had been given an assurance that judgment would be no later than mid-February.

On March 21 the solicitors wrote to the Vice-Chancellor again. Judgment was handed down on April 1, 1996. The judge wrote a personal letter to both counsel asking them to give their lay clients the apologies for the extreme delay.

There had been two other occasions in recent years when the Court of Appeal had considered reserved judgments: *Royle Ltd v British Steel Corporation* [1988] Ch 246, an eight-month delay after a 14-day trial, and *Bishopsgate Investment Management Ltd v Maxwell* [1993] BCC 133, a five-month delay after a five-day hearing.

Mr Goose in those cases was substantially shorter than the delay in the present case, even when due allowance was made for the judge's serious illness during 1995. A delay of that magnitude was inexcusable.

Mr Goose, who was not a young man, was claiming that Mr Wilson's conduct had been causative of his financial ruin. Mr Wilson for his part was a professional man charged with serious professional misconduct amounting to fraud.

Both were entitled to expect judgment before Christmas 1994 at the very latest and the fact that they were obliged to wait a year and a quarter was wholly unacceptable.

Mr Goose's first ground of appeal was that it should be inferred that the judge had forgotten large parts of the essential facts and evidence and that he had no clear recollection or impression of the demonstated evidence. Both were entitled to expect judgment before Christmas 1994 at the very latest and the fact that they were obliged to wait a year and a quarter was wholly unacceptable.

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Action struck out after security provided

Orsank SA v Spencer Associates (a Firm)
Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery
(Judgment February 2)

An application by defendants for security for costs did not prevent them from then applying to strike out the proceedings.

The Court of Appeal so held in dismissing an appeal brought by the plaintiff, Orsank SA, against the dismissal of Mr Simon Goldblatt, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge on June 4, 1997, when he refused the plaintiff's application for security for costs and requested that the defendants' costs be paid by the plaintiff.

In January 1996 the plaintiff gave notice of intention to proceed. On February 2, the defendants applied for security for costs for £100,000. The security was provided in the form of a litigation insurance policy for which the plaintiff paid £2,500.

The policy covered both sides' costs up to £100,000 each but contained an endorsement that the insurers were not liable if the plaintiff's action was struck out.

On November 8, the plaintiff sent the defendants a draft assignment and draft side letter stating that the insurers would be liable to pay the defendants' costs if the action was struck out.

The plaintiff's main argument

was that the judge failed to stand back and look at the position as a whole. That argument could only be advanced in relation to the final default of a solicitor who had conducted himself in such a way.

The person who suffered because the action was dismissed was not the plaintiff's solicitor but the plaintiff personally therefore it could be said that the judge was visiting the sins of the solicitor on the client and should not be for the desire to discipline the solicitor injure the plaintiff personally.

His Lordship was very conscious of the force of that point but it was wrong to give way to it. The plaintiff, even in a personal injuries case, had to be responsible for the conduct of his solicitor. Consideration had to be given to the position of parties to other litigation.

If an "unless" order were not treated as the last opportunity to put one's house in order, the court had no way to ensure that such orders were obeyed and such delays would continue to occur.

Even in the case of a consent order, the situation was self-evident. The only way that particular solicitor could be made to perform his duty was by such an order.

The status of "unless" orders had been fully considered in a number of authorities. Those had been reviewed by the Court of Appeal in *Hyatt Information Systems Ltd v Coventry City Council* [1997] 1 WLR 1066.

The approach of the courts was not new, but went back to 1980, including *Samuels v Lind Dresses Ltd* [1981] QB 119, *Re Joke's Tea Holdings* [1992] 1 WLR 1196 and *Carlisle v The City of Carlisle* [1993] 1 WLR 1293.

In *Firmen v Ellis* [1978] QB 885, Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, had said:

"As a matter of simple justice, it is the defendant's insurers who should pay the plaintiff's costs. They have caused the accident. They should not be allowed to foist

their liability on to the plaintiff's solicitors or their insurers, by calling 'snap' as if it were a game of cards."

Those remarks should in no way be considered as affecting the other decisions to which his Lordship had referred, but referred to a case where one party was seeking to take advantage of a technical breach by the other.

The appeal had to be dismissed, but everything should be done to reduce the consequences to the plaintiff as far as possible. The solicitors were officers of the court under a duty to do all in their power to ensure that the plaintiff suffered no more than was necessary as a result of their default.

The minimum required was that the plaintiff should be independent advice at the earliest opportunity. The present solicitors were under a duty to ensure that the plaintiff was represented as soon as possible by fresh solicitors. Those now in Thompsons were ashamed of the wholly inappropriate way the case had been handled.

It might be in the plaintiff's interests to issue a writ against his former solicitors or make an arrangement with their insurers. The two insurers could agree to meet the plaintiff's claim in the meantime. If they could not agree on quantum they could agree an interim payment.

Where only one of two possible defendants was liable, the Rules of the Supreme Court did not give the court power to make an interim payment order against either defendant: see *Rizzi Burns Ltd v Toole* [1999] 1 WLR 993 on Order 23, rule 1.

That fact did not prevent the parties from making such interim payments. When it was in the interest of the parties they should be prepared to do that.

His Lordship wished to make further remarks of general application.

The facts vividly illustrated that delays could have a serious effect on individual plaintiffs. Over 90 per cent of personal injuries claims

were settled. This plaintiff's case had been compromised far earlier.

It was in the interests of solicitors to handle cases in a business-like way. Delay had an effect in extra work on the plaintiff's solicitors, the defendants' solicitors and clients. Additional costs were incurred.

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Solicitor's aide must be employed

Regina v Legal Aid Board, Ex parte Rafina
Before Mr Justice Latham
(Judgment February 12)

Where a claim was made on the legal aid fund for work undertaken under rule 20 of the Legal Aid and Assistance Regulations [1989] No 340 by a competent and responsible representative employed by a solicitor, that person must have been employed on a contract of service rather than as an independent supplier of services.

When deciding whether to allow an appeal against a decision to refuse the grant of legal aid, a legal aid board area committee was obliged to give its reasons to the extent of showing that the applicant was not qualified to be employed on a contract of service.

Mr Justice Latham so held in the Queen's Bench Division in refusing the application of Rafina, solicitors, Sudbury, for judicial review, later able by way of amendment to question the decision of the board's costs assessment committee of November 25, 1996 to disallow the applicant's appeal from a board area committee's decision to uphold the board's decision to make no maintenance of the applicant's liabilities incurred for advice given under the green form scheme.

The applicant had retained a self-employed immigration consultant within its office in consideration of commission paid on his business. Advice was given by the consultant included legal aid advice under the green form scheme.

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Ice maidens melt American hearts

Four draws £4.90; Nine horses £24.95; Five draws £5.85.

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RACING: NATIONAL TRAINERS' FEDERATION CONSIDERS EXPELLING MEMBER

Hoad risks disciplinary charge

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

A TRAINER with one of the worst disciplinary records in racing is facing the threat of expulsion from the National Trainers' Federation (NTF) after he claimed that up to 30 per cent of races were fixed.

Roger Hoad, who is based at Lewes, has been asked to explain comments and allegations attributed to him in a Sunday newspaper. The NTF council will consider the case at its next meeting on March 9. If, as appears likely, Hoad is thrown out, it will be the first time the trade organisation has taken such drastic action against one of its members.

In an article which appeared soon after the arrest of Jamie Osborne, Dean Gallagher and Leigh-Anne Aspell, Hoad claimed he had been offered bribes running into thousands of pounds "more times than I can remember" to throw races. He alleged that races were being "sorted" every day with trainers entering non-trainers over unsuitable going and distances.

His remarks infuriated fellow trainers, several of whom lodged objections with the NTF. "A lot of people tele-

phoned demanding to know what we were going to do about it," Grant Harris, chief executive of the federation, said yesterday.

The NTF rule book contains a disciplinary section which allows for a member to be fined, suspended or expelled if found guilty of conduct which is detrimental or prejudicial to the objectives and interests of the federation, or the standing of trainers of racehorses generally. A member can also face disciplinary action for any offence or behaviour deemed to be undesirable and against the interests of other members.

"He has been written to and asked to explain his comments and allegations. So far I have had no reply," Harris added. "It is the first time since I have been doing this job that we have written to anyone under the disciplinary heading. It will be discussed on March 9 and I have asked him to let us have an explanation by then, and say whether he wishes to attend or to make written submissions."

Hoad has been found guilty of a number of offences at Jockey Club hearings over the past 17 years - ranging from horses who have tested positive to prohibited substances to threatening behaviour and abusive language.

In April 1995 he had his trainer's licence removed for 12 months after Elburg, the winner of a race at Pontefract, tested positive to four prohibited substances. Hoad was also found to have misled a Jockey Club official. Earlier he had been at the centre of another investigation but was cleared of tampering with the weights in a saddle cloth.

Apart from any action the



Supply And Demand, left, takes command at Lingfield. Photograph: Edward Whitaker

NTF may take after his allegations, the Jockey Club could charge Hoad with bringing racing into disrepute. "We have asked him to explain the remarks that were credited to him," a Jockey Club spokesman said.

Hoad said yesterday he stood by everything in the article but would not be replying to the NTF.

The Jockey Club will also be kept busy studying a confidential

report into a delay to the start of racing at Musselburgh yesterday. The meeting began 42 minutes late after a doctor failed to turn up at the appointed time. Under Jockey Club rules, two doctors must be in attendance for racing to begin.

Stewards' secretary, Robert Earnshaw, said: "It's always necessary to have two doctors as one could be out on the course attending to injuries."

RICHARD EVANS
Naps: Country Beau
(2.50 Sandown Park)
Country Beau will appreciate the drop in class after taking on French Holly and Grey Shot in a grade one race over course and distance. Jeff King's runner should appreciate today's faster ground.

Next best: Knight's Crest (2.20 Sandown Park)



Hoad: allegations

RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Lingfield Park
2.00 (2m 110yd) (11) SUPPLY AND DEMAND (P. Dwyer) 1, 11.5, 12.5, 13.5, 14.5, 15.5, 16.5, 17.5, 18.5, 19.5, 20.5, 21.5, 22.5, 23.5, 24.5, 25.5, 26.5, 27.5, 28.5, 29.5, 30.5, 31.5, 32.5, 33.5, 34.5, 35.5, 36.5, 37.5, 38.5, 39.5, 40.5, 41.5, 42.5, 43.5, 44.5, 45.5, 46.5, 47.5, 48.5, 49.5, 50.5, 51.5, 52.5, 53.5, 54.5, 55.5, 56.5, 57.5, 58.5, 59.5, 60.5, 61.5, 62.5, 63.5, 64.5, 65.5, 66.5, 67.5, 68.5, 69.5, 70.5, 71.5, 72.5, 73.5, 74.5, 75.5, 76.5, 77.5, 78.5, 79.5, 80.5, 81.5, 82.5, 83.5, 84.5, 85.5, 86.5, 87.5, 88.5, 89.5, 90.5, 91.5, 92.5, 93.5, 94.5, 95.5, 96.5, 97.5, 98.5, 99.5, 100.5, 101.5, 102.5, 103.5, 104.5, 105.5, 106.5, 107.5, 108.5, 109.5, 110.5, 111.5, 112.5, 113.5, 114.5, 115.5, 116.5, 117.5, 118.5, 119.5, 120.5, 121.5, 122.5, 123.5, 124.5, 125.5, 126.5, 127.5, 128.5, 129.5, 130.5, 131.5, 132.5, 133.5, 134.5, 135.5, 136.5, 137.5, 138.5, 139.5, 140.5, 141.5, 142.5, 143.5, 144.5, 145.5, 146.5, 147.5, 148.5, 149.5, 150.5, 151.5, 152.5, 153.5, 154.5, 155.5, 156.5, 157.5, 158.5, 159.5, 160.5, 161.5, 162.5, 163.5, 164.5, 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1395.5, 1396.5, 1397.5, 1398.5, 1399.5, 1400.5, 1401.5, 1402.5, 1403.5, 1404.5, 1405.5, 1406.5, 1407.5, 1408.5, 1409.5, 1410.5, 1411.5, 1412.5, 1413.5, 1414.5, 1415.5, 1416.5, 1417.5, 1418.5, 1419.5, 1420.5, 1421.5, 1422.5, 1423.5, 1424.5, 1425.5, 1426.5, 1427.5, 1428.5, 1429.5, 1430.5, 1431.5, 1432.5, 1433.5, 1434.5, 1435.5, 1436.5, 1437.5, 1438.5, 1439.5, 1440.5, 1441.5, 1442.5, 1443.5, 1444.5, 1445.5, 1446.5, 1447.5, 1448.5, 1449.5, 1450.5, 1451.5, 1452.5, 1453.5, 1454.5, 1455.5, 1456.5, 1457.5, 1458.5, 1459.5, 1460.5, 1461.5, 1462.5, 1463.5, 1464.5, 1465.5, 1466.5, 1467.5, 1468.5, 1469.5, 1470.5, 1471.5, 1472.5, 1473.5, 1474.5, 1475.5, 1476.5, 1477.5, 1478.5, 1479.5, 1480.5, 1481.5, 148

FOOTBALL

Big three leave rivals trailing in promotion race

BY MATT DICKINSON

THERE are those who talk regularly and rationally of a league within the FA Carling Premiership, where a wealthy few fight for the spoils while the impoverished rest are simply happy to survive. The same might soon be said of the Nationwide League first division.

Thumping victories for Nottingham Forest and Sunderland on Tuesday night cemented their positions alongside Middlesbrough at the top of the table and it is becoming increasingly unlikely that anyone will interrupt their race for the two automatic promotion spots.

Of course, all three were relegated from the FA Carling Premiership last season and the trend for clubs to yo-yo between the top two divisions shows no sign of abating. It is a predictable sequence aided by the league's themselves, who continue to award relegated clubs a year's share of the Premiership's lucrative Sky television deal in the season after their drop to the first division.

It is depressing news for, among others, Alan Curbishley, the Charlton Athletic manager, whose team continues to stay in the play-off places, despite picking up only

three points in its past four league games. While Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, has been able to reinforce his squad with two strikers in a week, signing Alan Armstrong from Stockport County for £1.6 million and Marco Branca from Internazionale for £1.5 million, Curbishley is hoping that the Charlton directors might sanction any kind of deal, with £1 million likely to be as much as he can spend.

After losing Carl Leaburn, the centre forward, to Wimbledon, his lively but lightweight side need a new attacking option if their unlikely promotion bid is not to falter through



Curbishley: optimistic

lack of goals. Too much rests on the fitness of Clive Mendonca, the top scorer with 16 goals so far this season, but whose absence for four games recently corresponded with Charlton's barren spell.

Yet the 1-1 draw at home to Queens Park Rangers on Tuesday night was the club's fourth sell-out crowd in succession and Curbishley is entitled to feel that, with 15,000 people regularly paying through the turnstiles, his club has Premiership potential.

"Overall, I thought the team played well and we are still in there," he said. "There is a good atmosphere about the place, an undercurrent that things are happening and it is not just to do with our league position. There is no reason why we can't be right up there at the death."

Forest's 3-0 victory over Huddersfield Town on Tuesday came courtesy of an excellent display by Pierre van Hooijdonk, who took his tally of league goals this season to 21. Sunderland were even more emphatic winners, thrashing Reading 4-1. Kevin Phillips scoring twice in front of 40,579 spectators. Sunderland lie four points behind Middlesbrough with a game in hand and travel to the Riverside Stadium on Sunday.

Not only Charlton will look at such success with envious eyes. Portsmouth, too, have reason to be jealous, not least because their problems appear to be piling up on all fronts. Relegation is a real danger, for leading Stockport County on Tuesday has not lifted them off the foot of the table, while the club announced yesterday that it is deep financial trouble.

Portsmouth lost £2.14 million in the last completed financial year and is running up fresh losses of £175,000 each month. Portsmouth must attract crowds of 18,000 for home matches just to break even, but the average gate at Fratton Park is around 8,500. Cash from the sale of Lee Bradbury to Manchester City for £3.5 million and Dean Burton to Derby County for £1.5 million has not been included in the current accounts, but projected losses of around £1 million for player signing-on fees are also not included.

Plans for a new £75 million stadium for Swansea City were unveiled yesterday. Silver Shield Group, the club's parent company, said the 25,000 all-seater stadium project at Morfa, one mile outside the city centre, would create 750 new jobs and include leisure facilities such as a cinema. It would replace the club's existing stadium, Vetch Field.

Brace of Fergusons do job for Rangers

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

ON TUESDAY night at Ibrox, two Fergusons, less celebrated than their namesakes managing Manchester United and leading Everton, came to the fore in Rangers' 3-0 defeat of Motherwell in the Tennents Scottish Cup fourth-round replay.

Ian, 30, was the grafter in midfield, winning the ball for the exotic names up front to play with; Barry, 19, was the creator, threading passes with delicate skill, allowing Jorg Albertz (twice) and Gordon Durie to score the goals that sent Rangers into a quarter-final meeting with Dundee next month.

Neither Ferguson had been in the Rangers starting line-up for the 2-2 draw at Fir Park in the original tie last Saturday, when Motherwell were minutes away from making Walter Smith's final season as manager a cup-less one. But Smith dropped Gaitano and Gascoigne and restructured his midfield, with positive results.

Of the two Fergusons — who are not related to each other — Ian is the old stager,

having been at Ibrox for a decade after joining from St Mirren in February 1988. Barry, who will be 20 next month, is something of a rarity given the predominance of overseas players flooding into Ibrox of late, a product of the Rangers youth team.

Smith was pleased with the performance of his team after the disappointing display at Fir Park. "I felt we played well from start to finish last night, and it was our best performance for several weeks," Smith said.

"The two Fergusons did very well. I asked a bit more from my midfield, and it was a good response from them. Having said that, I don't think either of the Fergusons had anything to prove to me. They have both shown me what they can do in the past, with Ian an established name here who has suffered with injuries, while Barry has just come in. It is always difficult to do that and stay in, but he has shown tremendous ability and offers real hope for the future."



Henman, who admits he is lacking confidence, returns a forehand against Norman on the way to his fourth consecutive first-round defeat

Rusedski digs in as Henman fails again

BY ALIX RAMSAY

THE image of British tennis may have come a long way in the past couple of years, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, success depends on hard graft and the ability to take what few opportunities come your way. Yesterday, at the European Community championship in Antwerp, Greg Rusedski managed to do just that while Tim Henman, depressingly, did not.

Rusedski fought his way into the second round with a tricky, three-set win over Hicham Arazi, of Morocco. Arazi, at 5ft 9in, is not the most powerful of players on the circuit but he is a counter-puncher with the happy knack of producing winning shots from the most desperate of situations. Left-handed like Rusedski, he is no

one's idea of an easy first-round opponent.

On a reasonably slow hardcourt surface, Rusedski found himself in rather too many baseline rallies for his liking and although he managed to serve 18 aces during the match, he could not find a way past Arazi until the first-set tiebreak. But with that under his belt, he let Arazi gain the upper hand in the second set before digging in for a scrap in the third to win 7-6, 3-6, 6-3.

Arazi said: "It often happens that I have quite a few opportunities and then the same thing always happens — I lose my concentration." Asked what

he could do about it, he said: "Hospital perhaps, or psychiatry. I don't know, I'll have to ask my coach."

All in all it was not a bad day's work for Rusedski, who knows that his ranking can only improve from No 9 in the world over the coming months. This time last year he was recovering from a wrist injury and so has no ranking points to defend until the Stella Artois tournament at Queen's Club in June. "Hicham is a dangerous and talented player, but I served well when it counted and played the big points well in the third set," he said. "I kept fighting and I stayed in it."

If only Henman could claim the

same. Seeded eighth but coming to the tournament with three first-round losses behind him, Henman was overpowered by Magnus Norman, of Sweden. The two men last met in September in Basel where Henman won with ease and some style. This time Henman was out of his depth as Norman went through 7-5, 6-3.

Having struggled to level terms from an early break of service in the opening set, Henman was back in trouble in the twelfth game and facing two set points. He saved the first with a high backhand smash but missed the mark on the next sending an overhead long.

He was broken again in the sixth game of the second set thanks to a volleying error and from there it was not long before Henman was packing his bags for the return trip to London and the Guardian Direct Cup in Battersea next week.

The worrying factor in Henman's recent slump — and this loss means he will drop out of the top 20 — is that he can identify where he went wrong but cannot work out why it happened.

Coming back from 5-2 down in the first set should have been the turning point in the match. "But I didn't take any opportunities," he said. "I was back to level but he was able to come up with a big serve or a cheap point whenever he was in a spot of bother. Losing is not great for the confidence but I must keep serving and volleying. I cannot become a defensive player. If I don't go back to my best, I won't get anywhere."

"I'm not the first player to struggle with confidence and I won't be the last. There is nothing you can do about it. If I can keep working at my game I know I'll come out the other side and the wins will come."



Graf seals happy return with victory

Steffi Graf (left) yesterday registered her first singles victory since her return from injury by beating fellow German, Andrea Glass, 6-4, 6-2 in the second round of the indoor tournament in Hanover. The second seed, who had not played since having a knee operation after the French Open last year, made light of her opponent, who is ranked No 102, to cruise into the last eight following her first-round bye. "I definitely feel that I can get back to my best," said a relieved Graf. "I'm able to push my left knee to the limit and I know I can play better." Graf, 28, won on her return to the competitive arena on Monday in the doubles, partnering Barbara Rittner.

SQUASH

British Open wins backing from Corby

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

MIKE CORBY, who captained England and Great Britain at squash and hockey between 1964 and 1972, is putting his Mike Corby Group behind the 1998 British Open squash championships in association with Hi-Tec Sports. Under the new arrangement, the championships will be staged in two cities for the first time.

After early rounds from March 25 to 30 at Lambis Club, London, the British Open action from the rounds of the last 16 are to be staged on the transparent Perspex showcourt at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham from April 1 to 5.

Corby captained England and Great Britain at squash from 1967 to 1971 and at hockey from 1964, competing in the Olympic Games of 1964 and 1972. A vice-president of the Squash Rackets Association (SRA), he was recently elected a vice-president of the World Squash Federation and appointed to a newly-created role as director of Olympic affairs.

For the past three years, the British Open has been attracting crowds of 2,000 to 3,000 to Cardiff under the sponsorship of Leekes department store, carrying a prize fund of \$100,000 (about £62,000) and an overall budget in excess of £250,000. The previous decade was spent at Wembley, first under Davies and Tate sponsorship and then Hi-Tec.

The British Open championship was last staged in Birmingham in 1971, when Jonah Barrington, now the SRA president, and Corby's greatest foe in their amateur days, defeated Afab Jawaid, of Pakistan, on the Edgbaston Priory courts to take the fourth of his six titles.

In present league play, Birmingham is no longer quite so prominent. A 3-2 home win this week by Duffield over Potters Bar, put the Derbyshire side within a point of winning the top A Group place in the semi-finals. With Potters Bar already certain of qualification, Birmingham's Priory squad, even with a match in hand, seem certain to miss the cut in third place.

In Group B, Brombourne continued undefeated with a 3-2 win over Bishop's Stortford, which leaves the second qualifying place for the semi-finals hanging on a result between Bishop's Stortford and Chichester on March 3.

In the National Super League, ICL LionHerts, took only their second win of the season — 2-4 over the league leaders, Maesteg — with Simon Parke, the British champion, and Chris Walker beating the two top Welshmen, Alex Gough and David Evans, but Del Harris going down to the former British champion, Mark Cairns.

SNOKER: UNHAPPY WHITE STRUGGLES THROUGH TO LAST 16 OF SCOTTISH OPEN

Hunter keeps Parrott firmly in cage

BY PHIL YATES

PAUL HUNTER, bolstered by an unshakable self-belief after making a significant career breakthrough last month, comfortably accounted for one of the game's most consistently successful players to reach the last 16 of the Regal Scottish Open in Aberdeen yesterday.

Hunter, 19, continued to provide compelling evidence that his triumph in the recent Welsh Open in Newport was not the result of an isolated purple patch when he defeated John Parrott, the 1991 world and United Kingdom champion, 5-0.

"Paul's on a roll at the moment and he's obviously playing exceptionally well," Parrott said. "He very rarely missed out there and when he did make the odd mistake I couldn't help but be impressed by what he's achieved."

Hunter, who has improved from No 43 to No 18 in the world rankings this season, moved 2-0 ahead with runs of 56 and 61 before winning a tactical battle in the third frame.



Parrott: whitewashed

A blue ball success ensured that Hunter extended his advantage to 4-0 and, with his rhythm uninterrupted by the 20-minute mid-session interval, he constructed a break off 74 to complete the rout. Hunter now meets Stephen Lee, the No 16 seed.

Having negotiated two qualifying rounds in the world championship, won seven matches at the Welsh Open and survived three rounds here in Aberdeen, Hunter has won 12 consecutive matches.

"I've got to have a chance to capture the title again but there's no way I'm going to get ahead of myself. What happened at Newport helped me in terms of experience and I couldn't be happier with my game," Hunter said.

Jimmy White, desperate for

all the ranking points that he can muster in a quest to reclaim top-16 status, also advanced by edging out Drew Henry 5-4, but in doing so was anything but convincing.

As in the previous round against Graeme Dott, White had to endure a deciding ninth frame. Clearly ill at ease, he missed three straight forward pots in the early stages, but when Henry jawed an easy yellow, White fashioned a break of 56.

John Higgins, the world No 2, and Ken Doherty, the world champion, wasted little time in overwhelming low-ranked opposition. Higgins required a mere 76 minutes to beat Stuart Pettman 5-0; Doherty was even more fluent with breaks of 101, 94 and 80 in a 5-0 win over Gerard Greene.

Results, page 42

BADMINTON: MILES MAKES WINNING DEBUT IN DOUBLE TRIUMPH IN NORWAY

England make most of lottery funding

FROM RICHARD EATON

ELLA MILES, 21, made a winning debut as England's men and women both won for the second time in the European zone of the Thomas and Uber Cups here in Sandefjord, Norway yesterday. As such, she provided just the latest example of how money from the National Lottery, which is allowing leading players to take up the sport on a full-time basis, is transforming badminton.

A few months ago, Miles was finishing A levels at South Cheshire College. In September, she left home. Now, she is a full-time player helping her country to within sight of the world's team finals.

Rebecca Pantney, who had been a lifeguard at a Cheltenham recreation centre until recently, made her international debut only a day before Miles. Lottery money has also been responsible for the return of Sara Sankey, who partnered Miles 14-18, 15-7, 15-7 success over Kinga Rudol and Dorota Grzedak as England beat Poland 5-0.

Nevertheless, the highlight of the women's victory in the Uber Cup yesterday was a recovery by Julia Mann, the

national champion, from a game and 6-8 down to beat Katarzyna Krakowska, the European championship quarter-finalist, 7-11, 11-8, 11-4.

In the Thomas Cup, the England men beat Switzerland 5-0, with Darren Hall overwhelming Thomas Wapp in the No 1 spot 15-3, 15-2. Their first real test may come against Germany today. The women will have to beware of a determined Scotland, who beat Wales 4-1. The winners of each will win their stage two groups and then require only one more success from two matches to qualify for the finals of the respective competitions.

SAILING

Easterly course gives Frostad the edge

BY EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

KNUT FROSTAD'S *Innovation Kvaerner* yesterday moved up to second position in the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race, a remarkable recovery after her woe-filled start to the leg which saw her rooted in seventh place for days, more than 100 miles behind the leaders.

Marcel van Triest, the Kvaerner navigator, has chosen the most easterly course of the four boats fighting it out for second place behind the runaway leader, *EF Language*, skippered by Paul Cayard. Yesterday the Norwegian yacht was just 30 miles west of the Falkland Islands and 18 miles east of third-placed *Swedish Match* over which she had an advantage in terms of distance to the finish at São Sebastiao of eight miles.

Kvaerner was making 5.4 knots compared with 4.8 for Gummur Kranz's *Swedish Match*. So close has the battle been since the quartet were becalmed just west of Cape Horn at the weekend, that this could yet be enough for Frostad to get away. A further eight miles behind Kranz, *Merit Cup*, skippered by Grant Dalton and *Toshiba*, skippered by Paul Standbridge, of Great Britain, were neck-and-neck.

Dalton reported that his tired crew had endured another frustrating night when his yellow and white-

hulled Whitbread 60 was totally becalmed for hours on end. "The temperature is still cold, basically because our progress north is so slow," Dalton wrote. "As I look at the speedo it is reading a miserable five knots. What a contrast to a week ago when it seldom read much under 20 knots — we disliked that just as much. I sense frustration within the team."

EF Language, meanwhile, is continuing to stretch her lead and is sailing in an entirely separate weather system to the boats chasing her. Yesterday *EF Language* was making 11.1 knots and benefiting from two knots of favourable current in the north-flowing Falkland Current. She was an impressive 473 miles ahead of *Kvaerner*. However, Mark Rudiger, the navigator, said the crew was "leaving" nothing to chance.

"Now we know that with more than a 400-mile lead, the hundreds of little unknowns are just lurking," Rudiger wrote.

"We have to be extra cautious about every decision and manoeuvre and go over the rig and steering with a fine tooth comb. Paul [Cayard] and I have been scrutinising the fickle weather ahead looking for any sign of potholes — 1,500 miles is still a long way and plenty can happen."

Cricket fine

BRYAN EYE

CRICKET

and reaps reward
England
ass test

Woolf and Giles

سكنا من الاصل

Cricket finds the answers to questions of sex

Dedicated and traditional lovers of English cricket tend to treat tales of the unexpected like bouncers flying off a rogue West Indian pitch. So perhaps they should be keeping their heads down in these bumpy and excitement-filled days.

First of all they have been sent reeling by the sheer novelty of an England victory in the Trinidad Test and the unthinkable prospect that England might beat West Indies in a Caribbean Test series for the first time in 30 years.

As if this were not enough, there are other, perhaps even greater, turnouts shaking the calm world of warm beer and Wisden.

Next Tuesday will see an historic special meeting of MCC at Lord's, where there will be a vote on the committee's recommendation that women, at last, become eligible as members of the most famous club in the world.

When the Marylebone Cricket Club was founded in 1787, the election of female members was not even contemplated by men, who had seen their sport develop around male environments ranging from public schools to public houses. The rules did not explicitly exclude women, other than banning them from the pavilion, but the regula-

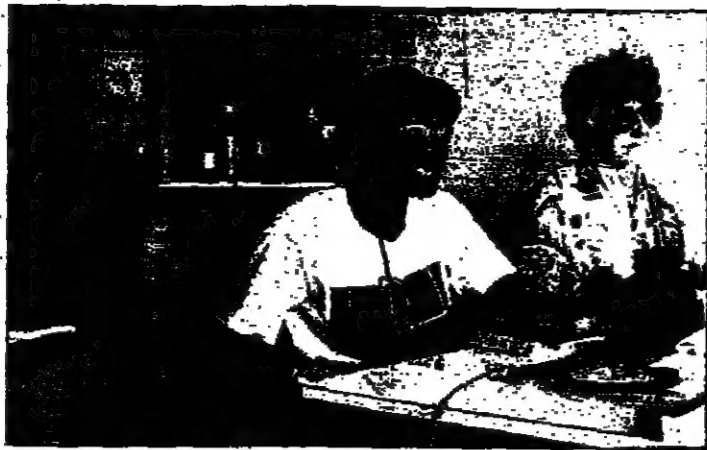


tions were drawn up on the assumption that it was a gentlemen's club.

Although the club voted against making women eligible for membership in 1991, it looks likely that members who vote on Tuesday will overturn the constitution (they need a two-thirds majority to do so) and open the way for the sight and sound of ladies in the Long Room.

And, as if to soften up the most traditional disciples of cricket's followers, the second has been changed, too, in that most evocative of all cricket's radio outlets — the BBC's Test Match Special.

For, when it comes to the sound of a female voice invading the all-male shrines of cricket, Test Match Special has quietly beaten the Long Room to it. With no hype and few fanfares, Donna Symmonds, a black lawyer from Barbados in her



Symmonds, centre, joins Marks in the TMS commentary box

mid-30s, made her debut last Friday as the first woman to commentate on an England Test for Test Match Special.

Those who heard her were impressed and delighted, both by her lively delivery and by her knowledge of the game. Her broadcasting began by accident. Symmonds was taking part in an island tennis competition when the radio commentator fell ill. She stepped in and, before long, she had moved on to cover local cricket matches. She has been broadcasting on home

West Indies Test matches since 1988.

Vic Marks, the former England spinner, said: "Her cricketing knowledge shines through in her commentary. She has instant recall of matches past — more impressively, she understands details of the game."

Her colleagues marked her maiden broadcast with them by presenting her with a Test Match Special tie. Symmonds said that, while she appreciated the gesture, perhaps a scarf would have been more useful.

Her debut on such an institution is certainly groundbreaking. Traditionally, any female voice in the commentary box, on radio or television, was limited to former players giving an expert's analysis.

As in most print journalism, women were only trotted out to cover women's sports.

From the end of the 1970s there was quite a change, with the emergence of professional women sports journalists and the appearance of women such as Helen Rollason and Sue Barker taking on traditionally male roles in broadcasting.

Sue Barker is a fine example of a former player who has become first a broadcasting expert on her own game, and then an all-round sports commentator. Her career took her from tennis to Torville and Dean's air dancing, and then on to an anchor role on Grandstand covering the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

The achievements in the commentary box of women such as Barker and Symmonds are another victory in the war to win an equal role in sport that women have waged throughout the 20th century.

Baron de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Games just over a century ago, decreed: "Women in sport have but one task; that of the

role of crowning the victor with garlands." His prejudices were such that it took decades for elite women athletes to elbow their way into the Olympics.

Even those women who practised gentler sport for fun and recreation fared little better. When Princess Maud, daughter of Queen Victoria, took up the infant sport of cycling (the aerobics of its day), her mother had lead weights sewn into the hem of her skirts to keep them down as she pedalled.

Since then, of course, women have broken through on every track, field, pitch and arena where sport is played. With even Test Match Special opening its airwaves to women, it will be a scandal if MCC votes against them on Tuesday.

Much has changed, even since 1991. At that time one woman journalist, a cricket enthusiast working for a sports desk, described meeting Li-Coi John Stephenson, then secretary of MCC, at a cricketing lunch. In a manner underpinned by two centuries of club tradition, he opened a conversation with her with the question: "Are you something to do with the catering?"

JOHN BRYANT

SPORT IN BRIEF

Selection dispute leads to walkout

BOWLS: Teignbridge, Devon's strongest indoor club, will be without four key players, Danny Denison, John Evans, Griff Sanders and John Wickham, for the quarter-finals of the Denny Cup at Lawson Park, Kempston, next week (David Rhys Jones writes). In a dispute over selection, the club's four skips, who have all played for England, called for the resignation of Les Fisher, the team manager, who has sole responsibility for picking the cup side.

When the club committee supported the manager, the rebels, who accused Fisher of ignoring the claims of a number of Devon Liberty Trophy players, withdrew from the side. Fisher, 74, admits that some of his decisions have attracted criticism, but points to the fact that Teignbridge have won all rinks, home and away, this season. Pam Langworthy, the club president, said: "The four skips thought that they were bigger and better than the club, but we backed Mr Fisher who had, after all, got us through to the quarter-finals."

Simpson to help

CRICKET: Bobby Simpson, the former Australia captain and coach, yesterday confirmed that he has agreed to act as a part-time consultant to the India cricket team. India cricket officials earlier this month said that they wanted Simpson to help improve their "dismal" side and lead them to World Cup success next year. Simpson said: "I have taken over as the consultant of the Indian board to prepare the team for the 1999 World Cup in England."

Latimer double

TENNIS: Louise Latimer moved into the quarter-finals of the LTA women's challenger at Redbridge, Essex, yesterday with another outstanding victory. Latimer, 20, from Sutton Coldfield, defeated Kvetoslava Hrdlickova, of the Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-3 in just 65 minutes to earn a second successive win over a higher world-ranked player. In her first-round match yesterday, Latimer, No 238 in the rankings, had beaten the seventh seed, Karin Kschwendt, of Austria, who is ranked 68 places above her.

Second chance

BOXING: Johnny Nelson, of Sheffield, has been given the chance to win back his European cruiserweight title. He was stripped of the belt after failing to meet Alexander Gurov, of Ukraine, in December. But Nelson, who found out that he had lost the title by missing about 10 on Telecast, is now to face Terry Dunstan, the new champion, before the middle of May.

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Queens Park Rangers v Crystal Palace (2.0), Watford v Norwich (at Norwich) (2.0).
POINTESS LEAGUE: Premier division: Nottingham Forest v Stoke (7.0).
FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Dundee v UCD (7.45).
JENSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Weymouth v Dover Sports (7.30).
RUGBY UNION
Club match: Pontypool v Neath (7.0).
OTHER SPORT
BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Watford Royals v Crystal Palace (8.0).
ICE HOCKEY: Express Cup: Sheffield v Nottingham Panthers (7.30). Sheffield Steelers v Braconet Bees (7.30).
SNOKER: Scottish Open (in Aberdeen).

CRICKET

Lloyd reaps reward as England pass test

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

SUDDENLY, the words England and cricket can be mentioned together without fear of embarrassment. In short order, the national under-19 side has won its World Cup, the A team has conjured two remarkable victories to take a series in Sri Lanka and the senior team has begun to turn heads at both one-day and Test match level.

The "significance" of this would have been lost if an extraordinary fortnight of Test cricket in Port of Spain had not ended as it did: England's three-wicket win on Tuesday was the single most important result achieved under Michael Atherton's captaincy and there is genuine cause to believe that he will now be able to stand down with his ambition of winning in the Caribbean fulfilled.

David Lloyd, the coach, was justifiably ebullient yesterday. "In the first Trinidad game we failed to perform in some key areas. In this game, we got it right," he said. "The team played as a unit against the best there is, and they won. They're English and we should shout it from the rooftops." For the nerves of everyone involved, it might be preferable if the three remaining games were a shade more sedate, but this seems unlikely. England and West Indies are limited but well-matched teams playing on generally poor pitches.

Back in England yesterday, David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, reviewed his emotions. Relieved? Euphoric? Vindicated? "Well, exhausted actually," he said. "I've worn out the carpet, pacing around the floor while I watched TV. I don't know what has happened to those Tests we used to have when one team always seemed to be 300 for two."

They seldom arise nowadays and there is no forecast of them here. In Guyana, where England arrived last night, the Test pitch has had its topsoil played and locals believe it will assist fast bowling. Barbados pitches have deteriorated sharply and Antigua are still unsure if they will have a ground prepared at all.

Brian Lara maintains his view that runs will be in short supply throughout the series. "The team that bats best will win," the West Indies captain

said. Atherton, previously concerned that low-scoring games would be in West Indies' favour, is now sanguine. "We want games that produce a result," he said. So we can expect more of the same.

Whether the personnel will be the same remains to be seen, although Lara and his colleagues have little room to manoeuvre. "Bobby" claims to have been on the "ground" and fast bowling remains the goal. However, the fact that the superb, enduring Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose shared 71 of the 108 overs in England's second innings this week tells its own story. They are wonderful bowlers, the best pair around, but there is a reliance on them now," Lloyd said. "There seems to be a reluctance to throw the ball to anyone else."

England have had a similar experience, as recently as last week, when the ineptitude of Andy Caddick and Dean Headley conceded the second Test and set off the chain of events responsible for the victory being celebrated yesterday. Lloyd was at the heart of it, with two unconventional decisions of which he is rightly proud.

With only three days between Tests, he insisted his beaten players rested for two of them. Then, while they did so, he publicly criticised Caddick and Headley and awaited their response. "The criticism was measured and deliberate," he said. "I have never been moved to do it so specifically before, but I stirred it up for all the right reasons."

After a team meeting last Wednesday evening, in which Lloyd emphasised the importance of shared responsibility, England stood firm, exemplified by the man who saw them home. Mark Butcher went from eleven-hour recruit to last-ditch hero, rising to every challenge.

"At lunchtime on the last day, seven runs wanted and Mark there with the tail, I found him in the toilet, smoking a fag with his pads on," Lloyd said. "He told me to leave him, said he was all right, that he was coping." And he did so, in a manner that says as much about Lloyd and Atherton's team-building as it does about Butcher himself.



The groundman's art appears to be in decline in the Caribbean, as Nasser Hussain discovered to his cost in the third Test at Port of Spain

Time to examine West Indian mettle

John Woodcock is hoping for a better pitch and similar excitement, with perhaps just a dash more panache

The third Test match between England and West Indies in Port of Spain has been one of the slowest, most protracted, most attritional and tortuous ever played. It was also, in its way, hypnotic, and, from England's point of view, wonderfully regenerative. To win by making the highest score of the match against two such formidable opponents as Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh was a considerable achievement, however laboured.

Had England lost, their chances of getting back into the series would have been terribly slender. They did it after being two Tests down with three to play here in 1953-54, but they had some unquestionably great cricketers in those days.

There has been much recent talk anyway among old-timers of how much more inventive, adventurous, assertive and resourceful the batsmen of that side — Len Hutton, Peter May, Denis Compton, Tom Graveney and Willie Watson — would have been than the present lot, but England were more accustomed to winning then than they are now, and, to be fair, this last pitch was not the one to reward panache any more

than Ambrose and Walsh are the bowlers to encourage it. When England went in after tea on Sunday needing 225 to win, I gave them very little chance. But happily, and surprisingly, the bounce became more even, there being noticeably fewer grubbings on the last two days than the first three, and no praise is too high for the opening partnership of 129 between Atherton and Stewart.

England must still have had the bitter disappointment of their earlier wicketless defeat in the previous Test match nagging at them when Atherton and Stewart went out. They had lost confidence in the umpires, not without reason (though they were to have cause to bless them by the end of the match); the last two wickets in West Indies' second innings had added 51 precious runs; England had just spent four long, very hot hours in the field; Atherton had been out of form with the bat and Ambrose and Walsh had never been on anything other than a winning side at Port of Spain. It is with a much

lighter step that England have moved on to Georgetown.

On the recent evidence, groundsmanship in the Caribbean is a seriously neglected art, and that can only be damaging to the game here. One of the joys of coming to the West Indies used to be the certainty of seeing great batsmen playing great innings, but there is no way in which the three Ws — Clyde Walcott, Everton Weekes and Frank Worrell — or George Headley, Gary Sobers or countless others would have become the irresistible stroke-makers they were had the ball flown around their ears as it did on the minefield in Jamaica and in the first of the two Test matches in Trinidad, or shot along the ground. In such conditions, it is barely possible to bat attractively and not always necessary to bowl well.

There is a trend towards charging former players with making the pitches rather than the specialists that one would have thought essential to the job. In this last match, it was possible to count the

really good attacking strokes on the fingers of two hands.

To some extent, the basis of this was psychological. The last Test match I watched here, between West Indies and Pakistan, finished early on the third day with 17 batsmen having been out long before the bowlers had moved sideways. The batsmen batted and the bowlers bowled expecting everything to keep long again this time: the former were constantly wary and the latter aimed simply to bowl straight and at a spot just short of a length.

England's batsmen soon realised how vital it was to play forward, but that is not so easily done against two bowlers who have spent these many years threatening the batsmen's knees and ankles but their ribs. Thanks to Atherton and Stewart, and, at the last, to the undaunted Butcher, it worked out all right for England in the end — but I would have to think that the three remaining Tests will be as unremittingly cagey.

Until West Indies had the best fast bowlers in the world, Test matches at Queen's Park Oval were invariably played on good pitches. "It surprised us as much as it must have surprised you," Brian Statham said when I asked him how he and Fred Trueman had just managed to reduce West Indies to 98 for eight — those three Ws and all — on a pitch surface here in 1959-60, in reply to England's first-innings total of 382 (Barry Richards 121, M. J. K. Smith 108). It was the prelude to a riot among the crowd, which stopped play for the day.

The match just finished will be remembered not for such distinction in the cricket or disaster in the stands but for a crucial victory agonisingly achieved by an admirably resolute side, but one that it would be nice to see expressing itself less guardedly.

When the fourth Test starts on Friday of next week, the psychological initiative will be very much with England. Being the naturally volatile cricketers they are, the West Indians will be as vulnerable as they were buoyant a week ago. It is they who have let a great chance slip and, quite likely, the series with it. It is their turn now to have their mettle tested.

SNOW REPORTS

| | Depth (cm) | Conditions | Runs to resort | Weather (Spm) | Last snow |
|-------------|---|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| ANDORRA | 40-80 | good | varied | fair | sun 3 32 |
| Soldeu | (Good skiing continues on the upper slopes; lower soft) | | | | |
| AUSTRIA | 0-80 | fair | varied | soft | sun 2 29/1 |
| Sol | (Good skiing on most slopes in the morning) | | | | |
| FRANCE | 82-280 | good | spring | fair | sun 4 20/1 |
| Alpe d'Huez | (Mostly good skiing, just a little heavy in places) | | | | |
| ITALY | 55-140 | fair | varied | warm | sun 12 20/1 |
| Livigno | (Spring-like skiing; very warm weather) | | | | |
| SWITZERLAND | 10-110 | fair | varied | soft | fine 5 17/2 |
| Nosivars | (Good piste skiing on upper and north-facing slopes) | | | | |

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain.

L: lower slopes; U: upper.

Flintoff and Giles resist in vain

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

ENGLAND A slumped to a 142-run defeat in the opening unofficial one-day international against Sri Lanka A in Moratuwa yesterday.

Chasing a daunting target of 326 for six, England were dismissed for 184 in 35.2 overs, with only Andrew Flintoff scoring more than 50. The remaining two matches in the series are tomorrow and on Saturday.

Put into bat, Sri Lanka were given a fine start with a 101-run opening partnership, scored from 104 balls, between Chandika Hathurusinghe and

Avishka Gunawardene. A 109-run third-wicket stand from 86 balls between Russell Arnold and Mahela Jayawardene propelled them further towards their impressive score.

Arnold was finally dismissed, having hit 87 from 75 balls, including a six and eight fours, and Upal Chandana scored an unbeaten 34 off 14 balls to help his team to 53 in reply. England were 30 for three within the opening

eight overs but kept on course with an 87-run fourth-wicket partnership between Flintoff and Mark Ealham, the Kent all-rounder.

Flintoff made 51 from 54 balls before being caught in the deep off Chandana, who dismissed Ealham four overs later.

Ashley Giles was the only other batsman to make any impression, with 35 from 21 balls before Sri Lanka completed their comfortable victory.

The five pylons at The Wanderers were in use for the

Reid takes dim view of floodlights

JOHANNESBURG final day of five: South Africa drew with Pakistan

FROM IVO TENNANT IN JOHANNESBURG

JOHN REID, the match referee in this unexceptional first Test match between South Africa and Pakistan, is to recommend to the International Cricket Council (ICC) that floodlights are not helping the players to see the ball at this level of the game. His report will say that batsmen find short-pitched bowling dangerous in such circumstances.

The five pylons at The Wanderers were in use for the

first time in Tests during this match because of bad light. "They [the players] are used to a white ball against black light-screens in the one-day game and are unaccustomed to a red ball against a dull background," Reid said. "The low cloud cover during this match affected the colour and quality of the light."

The umpires cannot use their meters in artificial light, so they have to be fair. Batsmen were hit on the head

several times during this match. The trouble is that nobody fully understands floodlights." Although there was no rain yesterday, only 10.2 overs were possible.

The entire Test, which began a day late and finished somewhat farcically, was unsatisfactory. Indeed, Reid fined Pakistan 65 per cent of their match fee for falling nine overs short of the required rate. South Africa were docked 20 per cent for falling five overs short.

Scoreboard, page 42

Scoreboard, page 42

Good and bad children and the odd adult

Completely and utterly are twin staples of the child-minding argot, often appearing at the scene of some hideous squabble, half a sentence ahead of 'Totally and Absolutely'. "You are Completely and Utterly impossible," a parent will begin. "I am Totally and Absolutely fed up with this behaviour." Most of these excesses are completely and utterly pointless, as was demonstrated on television last night.

Not that they should have been. Just about the last place I would put a child who is prone to ridiculous, show-offy behaviour is in front of a camera. This is like pointing a lens at a Boerian Serpenter and expecting him not to shoot anyone. Indeed, some of the behaviour on television is explained by the cameras. Family Values (BBC2) last night was reminiscent of a war zone.

The idea behind Lynn Allevay's film was to show the differing

approaches to childcare used by two middle-class couples. One lives in Belgravia, London, and attends, with their two children, a parenting course run by, you guessed it, an American woman in West Hampstead. The other lives in a large pile in Cornwall where the mother, Yvonne, believes in shouting at children and "the occasional smack".

Yvonne and her husband, Richard, clearly love their three children as much as Amalia and John love their two, but somehow one lot has come off the production line with most parts humming nicely while the other lot has a terrible noise emanating from somewhere under the bonnet. I shall resist the temptation to conclude that Amalia/John have got it right and Yvonne/Richard have not, because the film did not tell us where the starting line was: had the London children been badly behaved but were now, because of the praise

heaped on them during the course, turned into angels?

Had the Cornish children always fitted Yvonne's description? "They ought to be in the United Nations," my children, they could argue for about ten months as to which shape table they were going to sit around and when they'd decided about the shape they could argue about the wood. "Well, quite: we cannot have children behaving like diplomats."

Richard junior is a particularly spectacular example of recalcitrant youth. He is 11 and enjoys driving the family car around the estate at disturbing speeds: surely he could be prevented from doing that? Richard, saddled with two older sisters (a boy's worst nightmare), is morose, taciturn and repetitive. En route to a family holiday, Richard states an extract from *The Caretaker*, endlessly announcing "I've got no

REVIEW



Peter Barnard

shoes". Meanwhile in Belgravia, Rosanna, aged 11, and Hector, aged 8, are being showered with "descriptive praise" and issued with long lists of rules, which include: "Control inappropriate impulses." That might get Richard to park the car and sit down for a chat, but he would be more likely to eat the list.

A child of the precocious variety turned up in *Trouble at the Top*

(BBC2), back for a second series. *Ratner Returns* had a couple of delightful moments from Gerald Ratner's daughter, Sarah, aged 9, including a piece of advice about not blaming other people for things that go wrong. The former jewellery shop magnate, whose business fell apart when he described the goods he sold as "crap", is back in business running a health club, and this was the story of his shaky creation.

Ratner is no Branson: whatever fuels his progress, it is not charisma. And the health club, being built from the ground up in Henley-on-Thames, has to succeed. "It means everything," Ratner said. "I've put my head above the parapet again. It's taken me five years and I don't want it to end in tears." Or, as Sarah wistfully put it: "It might turn out like his last jewellery shop."

The omelette looked bad for a long time and when the swimming pool

was unfinished and the entrance unarmacked close to the opening date I imagined Ratner ringing up Anna Rice. The project dumped Ratner's long-standing partner and there was a constant battle to get enough paid-up members for the business to break even. But the truculent builders (if that is not a tautology) had just about gone home as the first guests arrived. By last month the club had indeed passed the break-even figure.

Which brings me to the most amazing news of the night, which is that nothing in *TV Dinners* (Channel 4) involved Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall groping about in primal sludge and boiling it over an active volcano. For some time now I have wondered when one of F-W's platefuls will come under investigation from Mulder and Scully, but last night's recipes looked relatively tasty.

There was a Greek-Italian evening centred on moussaka, prepared by Marina Schofield for her father's 70th birthday party. And there was a whole series of concoctions, including a sorbet made with gin and tonic, for a house-warming dinner prepared by Paul Francis, a police sergeant, at his new home. This was rowdy but disappointingly normal for an F-W show, until two of the guests, one male one female, undressed and swapped clothes while the rest of the gathering sang *Jerusalem*.

Was this some sort of Masonic thing? My mind went back to little Richard in Cornwall. If, one day, he should be filmed singing *Jerusalem* while wearing a dress, does this mean (a) his parents should have gone to classes in West Hampstead or (b) it was just the only way to get on television? Answers on a postcard to Sarah Ratner, a child of wisdom if ever I heard one.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (54355)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (72100)
9.00 Style Challenge (8325703)
9.25 Change That In Leicester (8444838)
9.50 Kitey (7233945)

10.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (72361105)
10.55 The Really Useful Show (7190451)
11.35 What Would You Do? A 23-year-old man, considering surgery to lose weight, receives advice (849181)

12.00 News (7200197)
12.05pm Call My Bluff Word game, with team captain Alan Corn and Sandi Toksvig (1100600)
12.25 Wipeout (780180)

1.00 One O'Clock News (7) and weather (89088)
1.30 Regional News (7) (7145703)
1.40 The Weather Show (7237123)

1.45 Neighbours (7) (821481722)
2.10 Petrocelli (7) (8250797)
3.00 Lion Country Daily series (from Longleaf House) (1345)

3.30 Playdays (4123971) 3.50 The Littlest Pet Shop (534364) 3.55 McGee and Me (4206258) 4.30 Julia Jekyll and Harriet Hyde (1129722) 4.35 The Mask (718161)

5.00 Newsround (7) (7198900)
5.10 Grange Hill Matt takes Geyms out, while Nathan's bid for glory proves short-lived (7) (4449477)

5.35 Neighbours (7) (721180)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (7) and weather (894)
6.30 Regional News (7) (894)

7.00 Watchdog with Anne Robinson: Consumer investigations, with reporters Alice Beer, Johnathan Maitland, John Nicholson and Peter Goodwin, putting the spotlight on the latest high street (reports under the spotlight) (7) (894)

7.30 Eastenders: Just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, a new character is introduced: a new character is introduced (7) (548)

8.00 Vets in Practice: Trude battles to save a dangerously ill puppy and Hannah employs various unusual techniques to help a Yorkshire terrier who's having a heart attack (7) (2074)

8.30 The Detectives: The hapless duo are assigned to the River Police. Comedy, starring Jasper Carrott, Robert Powell and Anthony Valentine (7) (1109)

9.00 Party: Political broadcast by the Conservative Party (7) (727987)
9.05 Nine O'Clock News (7) and weather (31653)

9.35 One Foot in the Grave Comedy with Richard Wilson and Annette Crosbie (7) (7848345)

10.40 Question Time: The guests are the MPs Mo Mowlam, David Williams and Nick Harvey and the journalesque Peter Hitchens. Chaired by David Dimbleby (7) (950109)

11.00 The Big Game: A Western, starring Anthony Smith and Keith Martin, with George Payne and Ron Perchman. Directed by John Huston (7) (8252465)
1.15 BBC News 24

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode: The numbers next to each programme listing are VideoPlus+ numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder to automatically record a programme. To use the Video PlusCode, enter the number next to the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of General Development Ltd.

BBC2

6.10am Questions About Behaviour (9573831) 6.35 A Conflict of Interests (3770355) 7.00 See Hear Breakfast News (7) (8340689) 7.15 Blue Peter (7) (93428)

7.45 Olympic: Grandstand (723243) 8.45 The Record (823058) 9.15 Halo Asia Series (823058) 9.25 Megamaths (1134398) 9.45 Come Outside (4898664) 10.00 Teletubbies (58800) 10.30 Storytime (3889618) 10.45 Teaching Today (426248) 11.15 Zig Zag (531193) 11.35 English File (954511) 11.55 Litchfield (5679709)

12.30pm Olympic: Grandstand includes 12.35 Short-Track Speed Skating: 1.25 Women's Alpine Skiing; 2.05 Women's Speed Skating; 2.20 Nordic Combined Skiing and Women's Biathlon (6552257)

2.40 News (7) (8450151) 2.45 Westminster (9591611) 3.25 News (7) (5425919) 3.30 The Village (7) (242) 4.30 Real Rooms (7) (540545) 4.35 Steady, Steady, Cock (540513) 4.55 Esther (958056) 5.30 Today's the Day (513)

6.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Wolf makes friends with a mysterious newcomer whose innocent outward appearance hides a sinister agenda (7) (479513)

6.45 The Mice or Maybe Zoe Ball's celebrity guests give their verdicts on three of the latest pop videos (7) (218058)

7.00 Essential Winter Olympics (7) (8384)
8.00 Detective: Weapons (7) (9136)
8.30 Top Gear: New series. The new Volkswagen Beetle, the BMW23i TVR Griffith (7) (2451) WALES: Bellamy's Harle (2451)

9.00 Superstars: Staff get to grips with the new Tescos' campaign, to relaunch the customer reward card. The scheme is put into practice with a cardboard evening (7) (8345)

9.30 Horizon: Saddam's Secrets: The dramatic background story to the current weapons inspection crisis in Iraq between the UN and Saddam Hussein (7) (47854)

10.20 Dance for the Camera: Political Broadcast: Conservative (7) (779808)
10.25 News (7) (8450151) 10.30 Political Broadcast: Conservative (7) (779808)
10.35 News (7) (8450151) 10.40 News (7) (8450151) 10.45 News (7) (8450151) 10.50 News (7) (8450151) 10.55 News (7) (8450151) 11.00 News (7) (8450151) 11.05 News (7) (8450151) 11.10 News (7) (8450151) 11.15 News (7) (8450151) 11.20 News (7) (8450151) 11.25 News (7) (8450151) 11.30 News (7) (8450151) 11.35 News (7) (8450151) 11.40 News (7) (8450151) 11.45 News (7) (8450151) 11.50 News (7) (8450151) 11.55 News (7) (8450151) 12.00 News (7) (8450151)

12.30pm Learning Zone: Open University: Cultures of the West (80049) 1.00 Out of the Melting Pot (51759)
1.30 Further Education: Marketing (94562) 4.30 Film Education: Regeneration (90575) 5.00 Teacher Training (7136) 5.30 Teaching Today Special (3401204) 5.45 Open University: Imagining New Worlds (3481827)

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HITV

6.00am GMTV (5542277)
9.25 Win, Lose or Draw (7) (8320258)
9.55 Regional News (8797109)
10.00 The Time, The Place (7) (52428)
10.30 This Morning (5889428)
12.30pm Regional News (8797109)
12.30 News (7) and weather (763277)
12.55 Shortland Street (650508) 1.25 Home and Away (7) (7207816) 1.50 Crossroads (2137115) 2.20 Chel School (9244460) 2.50 Vanessa (7) (8045819) 3.20 News (7) (5414074) 3.25 Regional News (5413345)

3.30 Potemkin Park (1465838) 3.40 Wizards (542242) 3.50 The Forgotten Toys (1363428) 4.05 Sliding Doors (7) (797304) 4.15 Miles and Angelo (7) (877800) 4.40 Cartoon Time (5027616) 4.45 ReBoot (7) (6537088)

5.10 A Country Practice (5039451)
5.40 News (7) and weather (197258)
6.00 Home and Away (7) (7207816)
6.25 Regional News (136345)
6.30 Regional News (432)
7.00 Emmerdale (7) (1722)
7.30 Wales: Wales This Week (616)

7.30 Babewatch (7) (616)
8.00 The Bill: Unwarranted in a rush to catch a crook, a red-headed, Ashton tips and falls foul of the law himself (7) (4242)
8.30 Blues and Twos: A look at the work of the community police officers of Barry in South Wales (7) (6277)

9.00 An Unbearable Job for a Woman: Corolla finds herself acting as bait when she goes undercover at an hotel where the proprietor is accused by his wife of sexually harassing female staff (7) (9074)

10.00 Party Political Broadcast by the Conservative Party (7) (779808)
10.05 News at Ten (7) and weather (536242)
10.35 Regional News and weather (61258)
10.45 WALES: The Ferret (604818)
10.45 Secrets of the Moor (604819)
11.15 WALES: Departures (604820)
11.15 The West This Week (604821)
11.45 WALES: Babewatch: See 7.30pm for details (7) (653708)

11.45 Swift Justice (527180)
12.15am WALES: Tales from the Crypt (518217)
12.40 The Jerry Springer Show: I'm Cheating on You (7) (273933)
1.30 New York News (6731285)
2.25 Bonkers (7) (9302468)
3.25 The Chart Show (7) (9529240)
4.15 The Time, The Place (7) (58020)
4.45 Freecore
5.00 ITV Nightscreen (6378914)
5.30 News (90914)

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CENTRAL

As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (650508)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (5039451)
6.25 Central News (430062)
6.55-7.00 Lifetime (476155)
10.45 Late Tackle (489303)
11.45 Millionaires (653703)
12.15am Eastern Morn (90394)
12.45 The Jerry Springer Show (2737204)
1.35 Not Fade Away (6730554)
2.30 Box Office America (5488914)
2.55 War of the Worlds (738333)
3.50 The Time, The Place (308755)

As HTV West except:
12.55 Home and Away (650508)
1.25-1.50 Emmerdale (70767816)
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (5039451)
6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (4588)
10.45 Moments of Passion (604819)
11.15 Air Ambulance (694432)
11.45 Midnight Caller (527180)

As HTV West except:
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (5039451)
6.00-6.30 Meridian Tonight (616)
6.30-7.00 Getaway (432)
10.45 Meridian News and Weather (88538)
10.50 Film: Predator II (9123277)

As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 Surprise Chase (650508)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (5039451)
6.25 Anglia News (430068)
6.55-7.00 What's On (476155)
10.35 Anglia News and Weather (88538)
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